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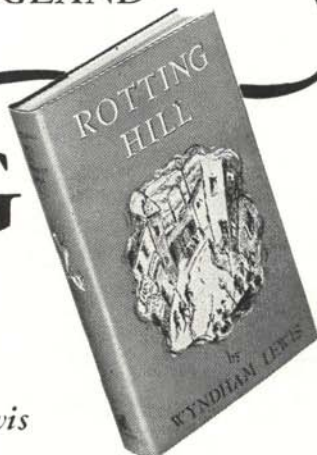
Wyndham Lewis: The Rot

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A WITTY and DEVASTATING SATIRE
ON SOCIALIST ENGLAND

ROTTING HILL

by Wyndham Lewis



ROTTING HILL IS THE LATEST, AND TIMELIEST,
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Wyndham Lewis is the author of *Tarr*, *The Wild Body*, *The Revenge for Love*, and many other distinguished novels. England's current revival of interest in his earlier novels is a tribute long overdue.

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RACHEL B. WALKER, *Assistant to the Editor*

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Freedom's Case Against

DEAN ACHESON

ON JANUARY 3, 1946, with about sixty other lecturers, many of them college professors,* I was seated in the old State Department Building in Washington being "briefed" by spokesmen for the government of the United States. One of the "briefing officers" was the Under Secretary of State, the Honorable Dean Gooderham Acheson. He stood there before us, with his English tailoring, his clipped mustache, and his somewhat smug barrister's manner, describing the world as he saw it.

"Now about these Russians," he

*After the Second War the State Department continued a practice begun during the war of inviting groups of college professors and itinerant lecturers to Washington to enjoy the privilege of "confidential and highly authoritative information." This was another of the semi-secret activities by the government lobby to sell the government "line."

said. "I don't believe the Soviet leaders are bad men. They are like little boys who enjoy throwing brickbats at other people's green-houses."

There were smiles, chuckles, and nodding heads about the room, and I was appalled. As a naturalized citizen I felt it might be impertinent for me to speak out, but I rose to my feet.

"Mr. Secretary," I said, "did it ever occur to you, sir, that that is exactly what the Soviet leaders want you to believe?"

He shrugged and shook his head condescendingly as he turned to me and asked: "Must every Russian move — every rock through a green-house — be the result of conspiracy? After all, what's the difference between Russia and America?"

"There is a great deal of difference," I replied, "and I'm amazed that you don't seem to see it. The difference between Russia and America is the difference between slavery and freedom."

"Freedom?" he quipped. "Isn't that rather vague?"

"No, sir, it isn't vague," I said. "If the victims of the concentration camps could speak to you — or perhaps if some of the lads who died at Iwo Jima could speak to you — they could tell you, sir, that freedom is most specific, most concrete."

There was an embarrassed silence while the Secretary adjusted his cravat. Then he faced the other side of the room and said: "Next question, please."

That night, riding back on the train to New Jersey, I felt depressed. I contemplated with a shudder the record of these Soviet leaders who, to Mr. Acheson, were "like little boys": uncounted millions of human beings enslaved and murdered; whole nations robbed of their identities; everywhere, the cruel, systematic destruction of human dignity. Yet here in the United States, in the nation which was the last great bulwark of liberty, the man who spoke for the government believed that "the Soviet leaders are not bad men; they are like little boys who enjoy throwing brickbats at other people's greenhouses!"

What hope could there be left on earth, I asked myself, if here in

America the Under Secretary of State cast a puzzled look at you and asked: "Freedom? Isn't that rather vague?"

No wonder, I decided, that our government was distributing pamphlets to our own soldiers saying: "When we speak of the Chinese 'Communists' we should remember that . . . they stand for something very different from what we ordinarily intend when we use the word 'Communist.' . . . Their program is a moderate one . . . quite in accord with what we think of as a liberal democracy." (Official USA indoctrination publication, issue dated April 7, 1945.)

No wonder that it was the policy of the United States to force free men in Poland and free men in China to coalesce with the Communist "little boys" whose first intent was the destruction of freedom!

No wonder that President Truman would declare: "I like old Joe!"

What made all this so tragic was that Mr. Acheson was not only himself confused: he possessed the power and the talent to impose his confusion on the President, on the Secretary of State, and on numerous lecturers and teachers assembled at the invitation of their government to enjoy the privilege of "confidential and highly authoritative information"!

I concluded then that Mr. Acheson, however "liberal" and well-

meaning he might consider himself to be, was a man with an enormous capacity for disservice to the human race; I have, therefore, observed him closely from that date; and after six years my conclusion remains unchanged. I believe that most well-intentioned Americans will subscribe to the same conclusion if they will cut through all the confusing propaganda and patiently examine the record.

ACHESON'S RECORD OF DISSERVICE to the cause of freedom begins at least nineteen years ago when he became one of Stalin's *paid* American lawyers. Acheson was on Stalin's payroll even before the Soviet Union was recognized by the United States. Before such agencies as the U. S. Tariff Commission, it was Acheson who appeared as counsel for the Soviet delegations, trying even then to win favors for Stalin.

On May 16, 1933, the United States Senate was considering Acheson's fitness for the position of Under Secretary of the Treasury. There was opposition to him because, since he had been the legal representative of the Soviet Union, there was fear that he might be pro-Communist. The opposition was led by Senator James Couzens, of Michigan; the defense was led by Acheson's sponsor, Senator Millard E. Tydings, of Maryland.

Senator Tydings made a vigorous

speech in Acheson's defense, assuring the senators that even though "*Mr. Acheson has represented the USSR*" (*italics mine*), he deserved the appointment.

Senator Couzens then withdrew his opposition with this statement: "I have been encouraged to withdraw my objection to Mr. Acheson on the alleged statement that he is a Socialist." (*Congressional Record*, May 16, 1933, p. 3484.)

There is no denial on the record by either Senator Tydings or Acheson that he was a Socialist.

(It probably never occurred to Senator Tydings in 1933, when he first began defending Acheson, that Acheson in 1950 would be the instrument for his own defeat. For trying to whitewash Acheson's State Department of the pro-Communist charges by Senator Joe McCarthy, Tydings was repudiated by his own constituents.)

So it is no wonder that Acheson was frequently at the side of Maxim Litvinoff in 1933 when Mr. Litvinoff was negotiating with our government for the official bestowal of this country's favors on the Soviet Union. (See State Department's own report on Soviet recognition.) Acheson and his closest friends, including Alger Hiss and his kind, were dedicated to the success of the Socialist revolution. And Litvinoff was only Stalin's ambassador; Acheson was Stalin's lawyer.

Just why, among all the American

lawyers, did the Soviet leaders hire these two: Acheson and Lee Pressman? It's easy to explain why they hired Pressman: he was a Communist and a member of the Ware cell organized for espionage in the government. The Soviet Union, of course, followed a general policy in all countries of hiring sympathetic lawyers.

Then why did Stalin hire Acheson?

To understand their Secretary of State in 1952, Americans must understand that he began seeking favors for Soviet Russia as a *paid advocate*. He was *selected* and hired by the Soviet leaders to promote their cause. He believed that the cause of Soviet Russia was a good and hopeful cause; and for most of his life he has been trying to prove that his clients, the Soviet leaders — if only they can be made to feel secure in the affections of free men — will be good little boys.

Acheson's case is just that simple.

TO UNDERSTAND HIM FURTHER, Americans must get a clear picture of his law activities. He shuttles in and out of the firm of Covington, Burling, Rublee, O'Brien, & Shorb in Washington, D. C., which until 1949 also carried his name. He was "in" the firm from 1921 until 1933 when he became Under Secretary of the Treasury. He lasted only a few months in the Treasury: Roosevelt called him a "light-

weight" — so he went back "in" the firm. He remained "in" until 1941 when he got "out" to go into the State Department. When he was "out" of the State Department in 1947-48, he was back "in" the firm; then he got "out" of the firm again to become Secretary of State in January, 1949. Whenever he is "out" it is understood that he is only temporarily "out," and he receives mail at both the law office and the State Department.

Acheson's son, David C. Acheson, and his good friend, Donald Hiss, brother of his close friend, Alger Hiss, both are permanently connected with the firm. Donald Hiss was with Acheson in the State Department until 1945 when Acheson arranged his transfer to the law firm.

And what does this firm specialize in? It specializes in representing foreign governments. It now represents seven foreign governments at enormous retainers: Pakistan, Iran, Greece, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. Since Acheson became Secretary of State in January, 1949, the firm has collected over \$235,000 from foreign governments.

If a foreign government is seeking a loan or some other favor from the government of the United States, would it be smart for that government to retain the law firm from which the Secretary of State is temporarily on leave? The law firm

with which the son of the Secretary of State is permanently connected?

Here is how the Acheson set-up works. In 1946 the Soviet satellite government of Poland applied to the United States for a loan of \$90,000,000. Acheson was then Under Secretary of State and, on occasion, Acting Secretary of State. And what law firm did the Reds retain to get the loan? The Acheson firm, with Donald Hiss assigned directly.

Our ambassador to Poland, Arthur Bliss Lane, pleaded with the State Department *not* to approve the loan. Mr. Lane pointed out that American citizens were being mistreated in Poland; that the Red terror was destroying all freedom. "With the greatest earnestness of which I am capable," Mr. Lane declared, "I beg the department not to approve the extension of any credits at this time."

On April 24, 1946, Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced that the loan, to be made through the Export-Import Bank, had been approved. The fee paid by the Communists through the puppet government of Poland to the Acheson law firm was \$51,653.98.

The loan was used to consolidate Soviet control of Poland; and in 1949 when he heard that Acheson had been appointed Secretary of State, Mr. Lane declared: "God help the United States!"

And here are some fair questions:

1. Since it is a matter of record

Qualification — Ignorance

The following dialogue occurred during Acheson's testimony before the Senate Finance Committee considering his nomination as Under Secretary of the Treasury in 1933:

SENATOR REED: Mr. Acheson, what finance experience have you had?

MR. ACHESON: I have had practically none, Senator.

SENATOR REED: Have you made any study of public finances at all?

MR. ACHESON: None at all.

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, May 16, 1933,
p. 3483

that Acheson was retained by the Soviet Union before he became Under Secretary of the Treasury in 1933; and since not until 1938 did the government require American law firms to disclose their foreign connections; did Acheson, after he left the Treasury Department, receive pay from the Soviet Union between 1934 and 1938?

2. Since the Acheson law firm was still being paid large sums by foreign Communists in 1946, is it possible that directly or indirectly — to Acheson himself, to the firm, or to some other member of the firm — is it possible that the Soviet Union continued payments from 1932 to 1946 and perhaps even later?

3. And just how much money has Acheson or his firm been paid by foreign Communists since Acheson was first retained by the Soviets in the 1930's?

These are questions to which Americans, whose sons are dying in battle with Mr. Acheson's former clients, deserve answers.

ONCE IT IS UNDERSTOOD that Acheson has made a career out of advocacy of Soviet causes, that either he directly or his law firm has been paid vast sums for services rendered to Communism, then the man's actions and attitudes become readily understandable.

No sooner had he entered the State Department in 1941 than he became the leader of the pro-Soviet cabal. What other position could "Stalin's lawyer" have taken? Almost immediately he was warned by Adolf A. Berle, in charge of State Department security, that the Hiss brothers, then in obscure positions in the department, had been alleged to be Communists. Acheson resented the warning; he made Alger Hiss his number one confederate and brought him to positions of power; and ultimately he made Donald Hiss an associate of his law firm. Other confederates that would soon gather around him included Owen Lattimore, John Carter Vincent, John Stewart Service, Lauchlin Currie — all the gentlemen who believed that "the future of Asia

belongs to the Chinese Reds" and that the Soviet leaders were not "bad men."

Inside the State Department the enemies of the Acheson-Hiss-Currie-Vincent-Service cabal were the men who wanted this nation to maintain an objective attitude toward the Communists — to cooperate with Russia but to regard Russia with healthy suspicion. Among these men were Joseph C. Grew, Eugene Dooman, Stanley Hornbeck, James C. Dunn, Berle, and others.

On October 4, 1942, the Communist *Daily Worker* denounced the Grew-Berle group as "fascists" and "champions of Munich," and Acheson and Hiss launched the campaign to drive the Grew-Berle group out of the department and seize control.

A report on the battle between these two groups was given to the House Un-American Activities Committee on August 30, 1948, by Mr. Berle:

As I think many people know, in the Fall of 1944 there was a difference of opinion in the State Department. I felt that the Russians were not going to be sympathetic and cooperative. Victory was then assured, though not complete, and the intelligence reports which were in my charge indicated a very aggressive Russian policy, not at all in line with the kind of cooperation everyone was hoping for, and I was pressing for a pretty clean-cut showdown then when our position was strongest. The opposite group in the State Depart-

ment was largely the men — Mr. Acheson's group, of course, with Mr. Hiss as his principal assistant in the matter . . . I got trimmed in that fight, and, as a result, went to Brazil, and that ended my diplomatic career.

So Mr. Berle, who wanted only to have a showdown with Soviet Russia in 1944 "when our position was strongest," was cut down and forced out by Acheson and Hiss.

Another noteworthy point is this. Even though Acheson had no Far Eastern background at all, he interested himself from the beginning in Chinese matters. It may be only a coincidence that both Lenin and Stalin, as has been extensively documented, always regarded possession of China as the key to the triumph of the Socialist world revolution; the Communist Party line, beginning October 2, 1942, was anti-Chiang Kai-shek, and from the summer of 1943, many of the messages to our representatives in China were drafted by Acheson. His initials can still be discerned on the blue archive copies.

Acheson's second most valued confederate was John Carter Vincent, and another was John Stewart Service. Both these men moved to power steadily under Acheson's aegis. By 1943 Vincent had become assistant to Mr. Grew and special assistant to the powerful Acheson confederate, Lauchlin Currie, head of the Foreign Economic Administration,

who later under oath was to be identified as a member of a Communist spy ring. By 1944, when the State Department was moving ever faster toward support of the Chinese Communists, Vincent was chief of the Division of Chinese Affairs; and by 1945 he headed the office of Far Eastern Affairs.

Service was one of the Acheson group who worked in China. He was attached to General Stilwell's staff until he was sent back to Washington by Ambassador Patrick Hurley because of his incessant activity in favor of the Chinese Reds.

In 1943 Acheson, directly, was able to render the Soviet leaders another tremendous service. The big relief agency, UNRRA, was being set up, and all pro-Soviets saw in it a chance to make it a tool of Soviet conquest. The trick was to deny UNRRA itself any right of supervision over the distribution of its food and other relief supplies.

The UNRRA staff was quickly infiltrated by Stalinists, and Russia put forth a plan to allow the "recipient governments" to distribute the food without any interference from the outside — the United States. The British and other anti-Soviet factions opposed this plan, but Acheson not only threw American influence behind the Russian plan but also forced the British to accept it. (See *Defeat in Victory*, by the former Polish ambassador, Jan Ciechanowski.)

The power of food distribution was the power of life and death in Central Europe in 1944-47; and thanks to their advocate, Acheson, the Communists were able to use American food as a weapon against patriots trying to resist Soviet enslavement of Europeans.

WITH BERLE'S HEAD ON a platter, the Acheson clique's next target was Under Secretary Grew. And by 1945 they had to get Grew — and quickly — because on June 6, 1945, the FBI arrested Acheson's boy, Service, and the *Amerasia* case was threatening to inform the country.

The FBI had recorded, verbatim, a meeting of John Stewart Service in Washington with Philip Jaffe and Andrew Roth, since identified as Communist agents, in which Service had revealed to them what he himself described at the time as "top secrets." In addition, the FBI had seized in the New York office of the pro-Communist magazine, *Amerasia*, 540 government documents classified as follows: Restricted — 119; Confidential — 208; Strictly Confidential — 59; Secret — 153; and Very Secret — 1.

It was imperative for the Acheson clique to stop prosecution of the *Amerasia* case. Under Secretary Grew was insisting on vigorous prosecution; therefore the Acheson clique had to oust Grew at once.

Acheson succeeded Grew as Un-

der Secretary in August, 1945, and two days later he reinstated Service to the State Department and *promoted* him! And what do you suppose was Service's new job? Mr. Hurley had sent Service out of China because he was openly supporting the Chinese Reds. The FBI had overheard Service spilling secret information to Red agents. So Acheson put Service in charge of placing State Department personnel in the Far East so that the Acheson cabal could eliminate every "anti-Communist" and place more and more pro-Communists in strategic positions.

Between 1945 and 1951 every effort to remove Service from the Department of State was denounced by the pro-Acheson press; and it was not until the Fall of 1951 that a Federal Loyalty Review Board finally forced his resignation.

Acheson's number one man, Hiss, went to jail for denying that he had passed secret papers to Communist agents. Acheson has been able to keep his number two man, Vincent, by hiding him in Tangier, by "clearing" him with meaningless "State Department Boards," and by delaying investigation by the Federal Loyalty Review Board. It was John Carter Vincent and Owen Lattimore, whom the boss of Siberian slave camps, Goglidze, toasted in 1944 as those "on whom rests the responsibility for the future of China."

On June 7, 1945, the *Daily Worker* called Acheson "one of the most forward-looking men in the State Department."

When, in September, 1945, the House Un-American Activities Committee prepared to hold hearings relative to one Sam Carp, Acheson's office prevailed upon the committee to drop the proceedings. Carp, a filling station operator in Bridgeport, Connecticut, had been discovered dispensing large amounts of money under suspicious circumstances. But it developed that he was the brother-in-law of Molotov, the Russian foreign Minister, so Acheson got the case dropped "in the interest of smoother relations with the Soviet Union."

After eliminating Grew, the Acheson clique next managed to oust Eugene Dooman, head of the important Interdepartmental Committee, the agency through which the State Department seeks to impose its policies on the Defense Department. And who replaced Dooman? John Carter Vincent.

And what was Vincent's first action in his new position of power? Arriving in Tokyo in September, 1945, was the most implacable foe of Sovietism on earth: General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. So Vincent's first chore was to change the directives of MacArthur concerning Japan; and on September 20, 1945, Acheson publicly rebuked MacArthur and announced that our

Japanese policy would be made exclusively by the State Department.

The Associated Press called Acheson's statement "more pugnacious than diplomatic."

The Communist *Daily Worker* applauded the clipping of MacArthur's wings by Acheson and Vincent: "The forces in the State Department which are relatively anti-imperialist have been strengthened."

The pro-Communist newspaper *PM* observed: "What the government seeks now is to develop a diplomacy based on better appreciation of what the Soviet Union wants."

On November 14, 1945, Acheson appeared triumphantly at Madison Square Garden in New York to receive the applause of all his press clique: the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, *PM*, the *New York Times* and *Herald-Tribune*, and, of course, also the *Daily Worker*. The occasion was the joyous welcoming to American soil of the Red Dean of Canterbury. Acheson proclaimed:

Never in the past has there been any place on the globe where the vital interests of the American and Russian peoples have clashed or even been antagonistic . . . and there is no objective reason to suppose that there should be such a place. We understand and agree with the Soviet leaders that to have friendly governments along her borders is essential both for the security of the Soviet Union and for the peace of the world.

The Communist press around the world applauded this statement by America's "great forward-looking statesman." Incidentally, other speakers on that program, who sat by Acheson, were Paul Robeson, Corliss Lamont, Joseph E. Davies, and Dr. William Howard Melish.

Contemplating that statement in Madison Square Garden, is it possible that any American today can fail to understand its awful meaning to all the Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Germans, Roumanians, Bulgarians, Yugoslavs, Albanians, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese — not to mention Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians — all the people around the periphery of Russia who have been enslaved? Here was a spokesman for the United States, not only expressing friendship for and approval of the Soviet Union, but also placing this nation's approval on the enslavement — actual and projected — of all the satellite nations!

Acheson was standing there in Madison Square Garden, surrounded by America's Communists and pro-Communists, arrogantly informing all the peoples of the earth within the reach of Soviet Russia that they could expect neither help nor hope from America in any efforts to maintain their freedom from Soviet slavery.

Acheson was saying in effect: It is proper for the Soviet leaders to enslave all the peoples within their reach. This country understands

and approves that process. And this process of enslavement is essential "both for the security of the Soviet Union and for the peace of the world."

The day that Acheson made that speech was probably the blackest day for freedom in the world since the end of the Second War. Stalin hadn't yet managed to seize China and Czechoslovakia when Acheson spoke; Acheson invited him to go ahead and do so with this country's approval.

IN THAT SAME MONTH, November, 1945, the Acheson clique, by their maneuvers, caused the resignation of our anti-Soviet Ambassador to China, Patrick J. Hurley. Hurley's removal was essential to prepare the ground for the Marshall Mission of 1946 — the tragic mission on which General Marshall was to demand of Chiang Kai-shek that he cease fighting the Communists.

On November 20, 1945, Acheson received Congressman Marcantonio with Milton Wolff, head of the Communist Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish war, and on November 21 the *Daily Worker* reported that Acheson had offered to intervene with Franco on behalf of condemned Communists in Spain. Previously Acheson had refused to receive Fernando de los Rios, head of the anti-Communist group of Spanish Republicans; but on December 16, 1945, Acheson received Juan

Negrin, head of the pro-Communist group of Spanish Republicans.

On December 22, 1945, as Acting Secretary of State, Acheson extended this government's recognition to the Communist regime of Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia. And this, despite the fact that only two months earlier in his Navy Day speech, President Truman had assured the world that the United States would never recognize a regime that was not elected by the people.

(When the American Legion protested against further UNRRA aid to Tito after American planes were shot down over Yugoslavia, Acheson declared that the United States had no authority to withhold supplies. [He had arranged it that way.] And in August, 1949, when a headstone was unveiled in Arlington Cemetery for the five young American fliers shot down over Yugoslavia, Acheson saw to it that no official representative of the United States Government attended the unveiling. [Reported by Columnist Ernest K. Lindley.]

It was on January 3, 1946, as noted in my opening paragraph, that I had my exchange with Acheson — in which he found no difference between America and Russia, thought freedom rather vague, and insisted that the Soviet leaders were the little boys tossing brickbats at greenhouses.

All the tragic aspects of General

Marshall's Mission to China in 1946 need not be reviewed here. What does need to be noted is that the instructions for General Marshall were formulated by Acheson and Vincent and mostly, as he himself admitted, written by Vincent. Every objective student of this period now concedes that the Acheson clique used General Marshall to halt the fighting in China and assure the victory of the Chinese Reds.

While Marshall was carrying out his mission, so costly to the cause of freedom, Acheson, on May Day, 1946, announced that the Soviet government had been invited to send observers to the Bikini tests of our newest atomic weapons.

In March, 1946, Acheson snubbed Winston Churchill after Mr. Churchill delivered his Fulton, Missouri, speech warning the world against the Soviet threat. After the speech had been assailed by the Communists, Acheson refused to appear at a New York dinner in Churchill's honor.

On June 3, 1946, the Coordinating Committee of the State Department, with Acheson, Hiss, and Vincent pulling the strings, recommended that the Chinese Communist troops be trained and armed by American Army personnel before they were "integrated with the Nationalist forces."

On June 19, 1946, Acheson was asked by Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers if he saw any danger

of a future attack upon us by the Chinese Communist troops that he proposed to train and arm.

Acheson turned on all his charm to answer the lady. "Oh, no, Mrs. Rogers," he replied. "We can rest assured that the Chinese will not do that." (H.R. 6795, 79th Congress.)

On July 20, 1946, Acheson reassured the country that there were no Communists in the State Department. (*Congressional Record*, p. 9716.)

In October 1946, without the knowledge of either James F. Byrnes or Bernard Baruch, who was then chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission to the United Nations, Acheson proposed David Lilienthal as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. The so-called Acheson-Lilienthal atomic energy report had recommended that we "exchange atomic knowledge with the Soviet Union," and that our mutual endeavors be guaranteed by "international agreement."

On March 20, 1947, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Acheson flatly declared that there was no danger of a Communist victory over Chiang Kai-shek. "The Chinese government is not approaching collapse," he said. "It is not threatened by defeat by the Communists." On July 30, 1949, in a letter to President Truman which served as a preface to the White Paper on China, Acheson

opined that "no amount of aid could have saved Chiang."

On April 18, 1947, Acheson again "cleared" Vincent of all charges of pro-Communism.

On May 10, 1947, Acheson, according to the United Press, took the lead "to shift the emphasis in the Truman Doctrine from an ideological crusade against Communism to an economic program for rebuilding Western Europe and the Far East into healthy, democratic areas."

In June, 1947 a Senate appropriations subcommittee addressed a secret memorandum to General Marshall, then Secretary of State:

It becomes necessary due to the gravity of the situation to call your attention to a condition that developed and still flourishes in the State Department under the administration of Dean Acheson. It is evident that there is a deliberate, calculated program being carried out not only to protect Communist personnel in high places but to reduce security and intelligence protection to a nullity. On file in the department is a copy of a preliminary report of the FBI on Soviet espionage activities in the United States which involves a large number of State Department employes, some in high official positions. This report has been challenged and ignored by those charged with the responsibility of administering the department with the apparent tacit approval of Mr. Acheson. Should this case break before the

State Department acts, it will be a national disgrace. Voluminous files are on hand in the department proving the connections of the State Department employes and officials of this Soviet espionage ring.

General Marshall received this secret memorandum — and did nothing.

In June, 1947, over Congressional opposition, Acheson insisted that the United States deliver \$17,000,000 worth of postwar lend-lease supplies to Russia. Since, under the Truman Doctrine, we had already begun fighting Soviet aggression in Greece, Congressmen asked why we should continue sending lend-lease to our enemies. Acheson forced delivery of the supplies.

This period saw the genesis of the Marshall Plan, and Acheson apologists like to point to his support of this plan as evidence of his anti-Sovietism. What must be remembered is this: the plan as originally worked out by Acheson included aid for Russia and the East European satellites as well as for the nations of Western Europe!

During the first weeks that the Marshall Plan was under discussion, it seemed that the Communist Party policy would be to endorse the plan. But when the Czech coalition government in Prague accepted the proposed aid, Moscow decided that the plan was a Wall Street plot and a device for "safeguarding Western Europe from Communism." Czechoslovakia was forced to withdraw from the Paris aid Conference.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1948 Acheson's old confederate, Lauchlin Currie, came before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He was accompanied by counsel, one Dean Acheson, temporarily "out" of the government. Both Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley, under oath, identified Currie as a Soviet agent. Currie, closely counseled by Acheson, admitted only that he had used his considerable influence to save the government job of Nathan Gregory Silvermaster, who was identified under oath as a member of a Soviet spy ring in Washington.

On December 16, 1948, Acheson's intimate friend, Alger Hiss, was indicted for perjury in denying under oath that he had handed secret government documents to the agents of a foreign power. Acheson had done a lot for Hiss. He had secured him the appointment of Executive Secretary of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944; sent him to Yalta in 1945 as adviser to President Roosevelt; pushed him to high distinction as Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco. When in January, 1950 Hiss was convicted, Acheson, Secretary of State of the nation the perjurer had betrayed, announced: "I will not turn my back on Alger Hiss."

In January, 1949, when Acheson became Secretary of State, some of the chickens had started coming home to roost. So Acheson quickly brought forward Professor Philip C. Jessup as his first lieutenant, and set Doctor Jessup to preparing the "Whitewash Paper" on China. Jessup's affiliations with the Communist fronts are a matter of record. He signed the atom bomb letter in the New York *Times*, February 16, 1946, which urged us to quit making atomic bombs and leave the disposal of our stockpile to the United Nations. He had been active in the Institute of Pacific Relations with Owen Lattimore and Frederick Vanderbilt Field; he was a member of the committee which had appointed Alger Hiss head of the Carnegie Endowment; and he appeared in court as a witness for Hiss.

The White Paper on China, issued August 5, 1949, could be called an outright fraud, or it can be left to the judgment of the New York *Times*, often an Acheson apologist:

This inquest on China is not the work of a serene and detached coroner but of a vitally interested party in the catastrophe. Unfortunately, at this point one of these vital interests is self-justification, which certainly is the enemy of objective analysis.

In 1948 we had begun withdrawing our army from South Korea, though it was known that for years the Soviet training schools in Si-

beria had been training and arming the North Koreans. The Korean National Assembly, on November 20, 1948, begged that we remain.

A secret memorandum to the State Department from Lattimore proposed that Korea should be allowed, as he subsequently stated more succinctly in the fellow-traveling *Daily Compass*, "to fall without making it look as if the United States had pushed it." Acheson announced that no policy decisions could be made until "after the dust has settled."

In the Spring of 1949 the State Department recommended that economic aid *only*, to the extent of \$150 million, be extended to South Korea. Congress demanded that military aid be included; the provision for military aid was included; but no military aid was shipped.

On December 23, 1949, Acheson instructed all diplomatic and consular personnel that Formosa had no strategic value. But in May, 1951, under oath, Acheson stressed Formosa's "strategic importance."

On January 5, 1950, the British extended recognition to Red China with the full knowledge *and approval* of our State Department. (Statement by Beverly Baxter, Member of Parliament.) On this same day President Truman declared: "The United States government will not provide military aid or advice to Chinese forces on Formosa."

On January 12, 1950, in a speech

to the National Press Club in Washington, Acheson discussed our defensive policy for Asia. "Our defensive perimeter," he said, "runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus." This policy abandoned Asia to the Communists and invited them to seize both South Korea and Formosa, since these areas lay outside the announced perimeter.

In this same speech Acheson jeered at Senator Robert A. Taft's proposal that we send a fleet to protect Formosa against Red invasion. He said he didn't realize that Mr. Taft was a military expert.

On June 10, 1950, speaking in St. Louis, Truman said: "We are closer to world peace now than at any time in the last three years."

On June 25, 1950, the Communists invaded South Korea, and three days later American troops began their "police action" on Korean soil.

On June 27, 1951, Acheson stated we would be satisfied if the Communists withdrew behind the 38th

Parallel. On August 2, 1951, he declared that the 38th Parallel "as a line of demarcation" was "unacceptable."

On September 13, 1951, President Truman said that Dean Acheson will be Secretary of State "as long as I am President of the United States."

THAT'S THE RECORD of Dean Gooderham Acheson as a fighter for freedom. Only one additional entry need be made.

On March 5, 1952, Acheson scolded Washington reporters for inquiring why he had single-handedly "cleared" Oliver Edmund Clubb, whom the State Department's own board had judged a security risk. "In the future," he announced, "I hope you will understand that always the responsibility for these decisions must rest with me."

During the period of Acheson's stewardship at the State Department, more than six hundred million human beings have been dragged into Soviet slavery. Soviet power has mushroomed until it now threatens the existence of freedom everywhere on earth. It therefore seems fair to ask this question: have the actions and attitudes of Dean Acheson aided the cause of freedom in its struggle against Soviet slavery, or have they impeded it?

On November 4, 1952, the American people will have the opportunity to answer this question.

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FOREIGN
INTELLIGENCE

What To Do About FRANCO

Thomas Ballard

Madrid
IF ONE IS TO BELIEVE highway milestones, all national roads in Spain lead to Puerta del Sol, a small, cheerful square with a fountain, crowded shops, and the red-brick headquarters of the Secret Police. But to me, the heart of Spain lies not here, but on the broad Alkala, near the point where it is joined by its major tributary, the Gran Via. When I stand here at sunset, I feel I can see all of Spain — in one neat package of symbols.

Here, facing each other across the boulevard, are the two of the three pillars on which Franco's Spain rests.

.....
Thomas Ballard, a roving newspaperman, has just returned to the French Riviera after a long trip through Spain and various other West European countries.

On one side, on a landscaped hillock guarded by white-gloved sentries, is the War Ministry. On the other, with an enormous insignia of five red crossed arrows on its face, is the Falange's headquarters. This, too, is guarded — by unmilitary-looking, armed men in jackboots, blue shirts, and red berets.

Standing on a traffic island between the two, I can see on my left the neon-topped buildings of some of the hundred odd banks which run Spain's economy from here. And to the right is the Gran Via, with its luxury shops, cinemas, magnificent hotels, and outdoor cafes where no vacant table can be found after sundown. The Gran Via is Fifth Avenue with a Spanish accent, the office girl's dreamland, the promenade of a hundred thousand people,

and a place where wealth has its nightly confrontation with poverty.

When Spain rolls out her red carpets for visiting VIP's, the route runs through here — past the War Ministry and the Falangist headquarters, down the Gran Via, and then on to Generalissimo Francisco Franco's El Pardo Palace. On such occasions the streets are bedecked with flags, the buildings with choice rugs. Union members, children, and Falangists line the route and cheer when General Franco and the visitor roll by, deep in a formation of galloping Moorish bodyguards — the most magnificent body of horsemen in the West.

A fifteen-minute drive from here and you are in the Spanish countryside, which is to the Gran Via what the eighteenth century is to the twentieth. Strike north into the Castile, southwest into Extremadura, or south into Toledo, and you run into sights for which the Gran Via had not prepared you. It does not take long to realize that the Gran Via's hinterland is made up of thousands of run-down villages, where misery is a way of life, where doctors and clinics are rare, where every third person is illiterate, and where even a communal well is often a hoped-for luxury.

Seeing them you understand why foreign economists here speak of the Alkala and the Gran Via as symptoms of the sicknesses which besiege Spain. There are far too

many banks on the Alkala for the productive financing that is being done in Spain, and they run most of the economy by remote control and suck the nation's wealth into their vaults. As to the Grand Via, it is, figuratively, the habitat of the southern grandees and the northern industrialists who winter here and invest their earnings in the Madrid real estate, in speculation and high living.

THE DIAGNOSIS of Spain's main ailments is presented statistically in three key reports — one prepared in 1949 by a Spanish bank, another drawn in 1951 by the British, and a third, drafted by Professor Sidney Sufrin, who was sent here by Washington last Fall to take Spain's economic pulse. The reports may differ in emphasis; the diagnosis is the same. Spain is suffering from the same ailments which afflict most Mediterranean countries — but more painfully. The methods of production are fifty years behind; raw materials are short; wealth is maldistributed; the moneyed men will invest only in projects which promise high returns quick; and workers are both inefficient and tragically underpaid.

The ailments are complicated by the passions and dictates of Spanish politics. The Civil War cost a million lives, and one need only go to the suburbs of Madrid to find ruins of the conflict that ended thirteen

years ago. To repair all this vast damage — to rebuild houses, bridges, railroads, and factories — Spain has had to depend almost solely on her own efforts. As I write this, the total dollar credits she has had since the war are still well below \$150,000,000.

IT IS ON THIS BACKGROUND that Franco has imposed his Falangist State. The mixture is heady. More than ever in history, power is centralized in Madrid. The Falange itself is a new enormous bureaucracy placed atop an already vast State bureaucracy. Any decision Madrid makes has to filter through this huge and unwieldy apparatus. An American businessman who complains of red tape ought to hear a few tales from his Spanish colleague of his attempt to get his State allocation of nails or lubricants or even a clinic for his town.

The Falange is everything. It runs the "syndicates," which cozily embrace both the employers and workers. (Even matadors cannot fight until they join the Syndicate of Entertainers, Division of Bull-Fighters.) It dominates education. It controls the press, literature, stage, movies. With its philosophy rooted in Mussolini's corporate state, the Falange strives to control trade and industry, investment and planning, employers and labor. No factory — even if it is losing money — can lay off employees without a Falangist O.K. And the workers can neither

strike, nor change their Syndicates, nor toss out the Syndical officials they dislike. Falangists hold party and State jobs interchangeably and often concurrently. It is no longer necessary to belong to the *Movimiento* to get a good State job, and any Falangist who flashes his party badge to get preference may get a chuckle instead. But no one here takes the Falange as a joke. Franco himself is its top man, and he has made it plain that "The *Movimiento* is Spain; Spain is the *Movimiento*."

There is, finally, an obsession with show-off construction. "Industrialize! Industrialize! Industrialize! These are the three main planks in our program," a Falangist official told me. Thus, Spain builds mediocre planes; turns out automobiles which cost three times as much as comparable foreign cars, and break down three times sooner; and (with American help) produces penicillin. At the same time, countless peasants lack a good metal plough. Not far from the Gran Via an enormous new building is being prepared for the Air Ministry — which has no air force. (The Air Minister's classic explanation: "It's true we have few aircraft. But we do have lots of air.") And many projects are launched with little idea of how they are to be financed. In Bilbao, I was shown a huge and handsome State hospital. It has been under construction for years, but remains

unfinished, and I saw no men at work on it. I drove south, across the length of Spain, and kept running into these handsome, and unfinished, hospitals. It got to be so that by the time I saw a vast structure on the horizon, near Cadiz, I suggested facetiously: "Bet you it's an unfinished hospital." It was. Yet, hospitals are one of Spain's most desperate needs — along with schools, roads, low-cost housing, and just plain potable water.

One need not be a specialist to see Spain's worst malady at first glance. It is the sickness of her agriculture. The trouble with Spain is that far too many people produce far too little food at far too high a cost. Last year's crop was the best in seventeen years, and people have by now cheerfully come to take it as normal. But one only has to glance at the graph of wheat production to see the steady decline in the past generation. If in the early thirties Spain produced enough food to feed herself, today she must buy her wheat and potatoes abroad to stay alive.

It is not easy to apportion the blame. The land is worn out by primitive cultivation, hungry for fertilizer, parched for lack of water. (The years 1948 and 1949 were among the driest in a century.) But man has contributed his share to the debacle. Out of the total cultivated area of twenty million hectares, only one million is irrigated.

Many farmers still till their land with prehistoric ploughs, made of a forked tree branch, and little has been done to supply them with better ploughs — or to teach them more modern methods of agriculture. What few State efforts at reforestation I have seen are pathetic.

Two years ago, a Congress of Agricultural Engineers proposed the importation of 37,500 tractors within three years. This was a daydream. It is a very, very rare farmer who can afford to buy even a mule. But, in any case, tractors would not alter the picture of near-Mexican peonage. British officials estimate that of each twenty persons working on the land, six own their fields, three are sharecroppers, two are farm workers with regular jobs, and *nine* are seasonal workers, who are lucky to be employed five months a year. These nine constitute a grave economic problem — and a social cancer.

THE SHORT, PUDGY, SIXTY-YEAR-
old general who presides over this scene is in many ways a remarkable man — if only because he survived the storms which killed his two ex-patrons, Hitler and Mussolini. Many here ascribe it to Franco's luck. Death has long claimed any Spaniards who might have become his rivals, and as for his foreign foes, they simply missed the bus. Back in 1946, the moneyed men here were so certain the West would unseat Franco that they smuggled millions

of pesetas to safekeeping abroad. At that time, many think, it might have required only a loud bellow from the West to have the Army change the Chief of State. (It required only a frown to get the Spanish forces out of Tangier, which they hopefully seized during the war.)

But the West did not bother with Franco, and he rode out this storm, as he did last year's wave of general strikes. Unrehearsed, spectacular, and illegal, the strikes were a genuine mass protest against the low wages, the high prices, the rampant black market, and official corruption. An average day's wage bought (and this is still true) only a pound of meat, *or* five pounds of rice or macaroni, *or* a pound and a half of sugar. The unrest was kindled with price tags. But I do not think it ever came close to unseating Franco. There were mass arrests on the quiet, but he never used all the power he commands to crush dissent.

BY NO YARDSTICK is Franco a great statesman. But he has "survival qualities." As befits a former chief of the Spanish Foreign Legion, who used to ride into battle with his chest bared, he has a good set of nerves and extraordinary tenacity. He understands the bases of State power, and as a practical politician he could give lessons to the present generation of Tammany Hall satchems. He has, finally, made use of national pride, fears, and hatreds.

For the first four or five years of his dictatorship, Franco rested his regime on the tripod of Army, the Falange, and Nazi help — implied if not actual. When the Axis began to crumble, he was shrewd enough to make readjustments. Thus, the Axis leg of the tripod was removed, and in its place Franco installed the Church. The outward sign of this change was the dismissal of his own brother-in-law, Ramon Serrano Suner, an ambitious and sinister figure who handled Franco's contacts with Hitler and Mussolini (and, incidentally, ran the Secret Police and the Falange). As I write this, an ex-President of Accion Catolica is Franco's Foreign Minister (a war-time hold-over); the Bishop of Madrid sits on the Falange's governing council; and the Primate of the Spanish Church is reputed to be among Franco's intimate advisers. The harmony is not total. The Archbishop of Valencia, for instance, keeps issuing anti-government blasts, detailing the privations of the man-in-the-street. But, on the whole, things move along smoothly enough.

Yet, despite the political tripod, it takes only a few days here to discover that Franco is unpopular. One expression of this — as in the Communist-dominated countries — is jokes. When the olive oil ration is cut to an eighth (octavo) of a liter every ten days, the people begin to refer to him as "Francisco Octavo

... de Litro." A popular joke tells of a worker who brings a fish home. "I can't fry it," says his wife. "Franco gave us no oil ration this week." The worker then tosses the fish back into the river, whereupon—in the manner of crowds at Falangist rallies—the fish cries, "Franco! *Si! Si! Si!*" Other jokes deal with Franco's corpulence and uniforms, his Moorish bodyguard, the armor-plated car given him by Hitler, his wife's penchant for jewelry.

FRANCO is not unaware of all this. The Falangist propaganda machine works busily at popularizing him. The Press Directorate requires that all news of the Chief of State and his family be front-paged. It is a rare day when the newspapers do not show him hunting with the Caliph of Spanish Morocco, watching a bullfight with some official South American guest, sailing on his large, white yacht, the *Azur*, or just playing with his infant granddaughter. According to the press, he is a man of many virtues, including a daily game of tennis and restraint in drinking.

Perhaps the dominant theme in the propaganda—as it is in Franco's own utterances—is nationalism. Franco genuinely believes that he has arrested Spain's historic decline (for which he fiercely blames Britain). In his New Year's message, broadcast in the late hours of 1951,

he proudly told his people of the "new era" which has now succeeded "two centuries of national prostration." The people are constantly reminded that Spain is still the "motherland" of most South American nations—and vast sums are spent on Falangist propaganda there too. Last summer, the Falange launched an annual "Day of Mourning" for Gibraltar, to be observed until it is "rejoined to the motherland." But, above all, the Spaniards are encouraged to take pride in "the new era" and the man who made it possible. Why has the West changed its policy towards Spain? Because, a Madrid paper explains, it has finally realized that Spain is the only European nation with a strong army, economy, political system, and faith in itself. Why do tourists come to Spain? Because, says another daily, foreigners have begun to realize that this is the home of freedom and pure ideals, which "they probably have not enjoyed at home."

Unluckily, this propaganda is out of key with the inadequate rations, high prices, and poor housing. But between unpopularity and revolt there is an immense gap. Conspiracy is difficult in a State in which the huge Secret Police is complemented by 800,000 Falangists. It is handicapped even more by fear of another civil war and a widespread hatred for the Communists and Russia. Somehow, Franco has managed to instill the idea that he is the only

alternative to Communism in Spain. Not long ago I talked to two professional men here. One said: "I detest this man, but I fear anarchy more. I've seen normal people, goaded by the Communists, set churches on fire. I don't want to see it again." The other said, "Early in the war, a peasant came in from the suburbs with his donkey. He got into the top-floor apartment right in this building, and kept the animal on straw in the bathroom for two years. This is social madness. I don't want it again."

NO ONE HERE expects Franco to liberalize his regime to suit the American palate. A totalitarian regime cannot be "liberalized," and the Falange is the skeleton on which the Franco State hangs. But many here hope that contacts with the West will exert a strong influence on the regime — make it more susceptible to public opinion, readier to execute some of the reforms which still remain on paper, and perhaps less iron-handed. And still more people hope that American aid will mean more bread.

There are many valid objections to working with Franco. He is a dictator; the Falange is frankly patterned after Il Duce's Fascist Party, from its philosophy to its salute; and Spain is a police state, with no democratic nonsense about it. Even from a military point of view, there are doubts. The United States Air

Force apparently feels that the new great bases it has acquired in North Africa are superior to any it can get in Spain; and the Chiefs of Staff are not sure they want to embark on the multi-billion dollar job of converting Franco's army into a modern force.

But the arguments in favor of American aid are equally persuasive. In the coming years of the Great Conflict — hot or cold — we shall need every bit of goodwill and help we can get. A moderate investment here will give us that. For, despite the anti-American propaganda in Spain in recent years, one finds here a vast backlog of affection for the United States.

This goodwill can be expanded with prudent help. As Dr. Sufrin — along with the other Western experts here — indicates, this does not mean great gobs of aid which the primitive economy of the country cannot digest. Nor does it mean pumping dollars into the Falangist plans for industrialization. What can be done is to make full use of the industrial plant already in existence. At the same time, moderate allotments — perhaps \$150,000,000 a year — should be put into transport, electric power, and the starving countryside. What Spain needs urgently is repair of railroads and highways, new rolling stock, and trucks. She needs bread, some vital raw materials, and hydro-electric equipment. Her villages, finally,

need fertilizer, mules, tractors, ploughs, and funds for such projects as irrigation and Iowa-type county agents. When Spain's food production begins to climb, then the whole tragic process of national impoverishment will be reversed. The people will have more to eat, and will work

better. Less money will be spent on importing food, and more on importing machinery. And people with fuller stomachs might then be inclined to think a little more and perhaps a little better of democracy — and of the helpful hands of Uncle Sam.

The Spanish Jungle

The big question today is whether the dollars Franco is expecting, like the dawn after a long night, will be used effectively to better the situation in Spain. It is not a question whether Franco should make his regime a little more democratic or not, but simply whether this regime is at all capable of resurrecting the country.

Any reform directed by the state will inevitably be caught up in the Spanish jungle of bureaucratic intervention, isolationist autarchism, indifference, and petty bribery. It is, therefore, useless to discuss which form of government would be most suited to the country. One is, indeed, rather tempted to use the words of the famous conservative Spanish politician of the nineteenth century, Romero Robledo: "*Esto no se arregla, ni hay quien le arregle, ni conviene que se arregle*" (Nothing betters itself by itself, there is nobody who could make it any better, and it is better not to make anything better at all). The practical consequence of such an attitude is the method of "muddling through" without looking for any final solution. Spain is like an ancient house whose penthouse is inhabited by millionaires and its cellar by have-nots. Today, people are busy — at a tremendous cost — to install bathrooms and to put electric lights into the cellar; and nobody, not even the have-nots, want to move into a new building. On the contrary, if anybody tried to tear down the dilapidated building, millionaires and have-nots alike would raise a violent protest. Thus, all that can be done is to pour in some concrete, and to wait what heaven may send.

PETER SCHMID, in an article in *DER MONAT*, Berlin, 1951

How to steal \$174,241,840.14 —

and get away with it

The Biggest Theft in History

Sam Boal
and Serge Fliegers



THE SLUMBROUS SIESTA HOUR ON that muggy afternoon of October 10, 1948, had dragged most of Havana's business and social life to a halt. Here and there — in the bar La Florida, in the Prado 86 club, in the Café Al Laska — a few of Havana's celebrated pleasure girls sat sipping rum and lemon. There wasn't much for the girls to do. The tourist season in Cuba was over, and the tourists — the girls' best customers — had gone on home, back to Painted Post and Apple Valley. And of course the girls

didn't bother to talk to the few men in the bars. They were local boys, and as such were penniless.

The girls, like everyone else in Havana that day, were brilliantly wrong. The Cubans were penniless, it is true. But in a few hours they would all be almost indescribably rich. They would have pulled off the greatest theft in history, part of a scheme through which, in the end, they would have stolen the staggering, fabulous sum of \$174,241,840.14.

It was a crime so fantastically grandiose that it makes previous embezzlers look like little boys, caught with their hands in a cookie jar. The amount they stole was revealed when an indictment naming names and detailing figures was recently handed down in Havana. But how

Sam Boal is a regular contributor to the New York Times magazine and Holiday. Serge Fliegers, editor of the Inter Continental Press, has previously appeared in the MERCURY. Both are great friends and admirers of Cuba.

they did it has never till now been made public. Furthermore, the whole crime might have gone undetected if it had not been for the dogged skill with which a Cuban Senator named Pelayo Cuervo tracked down the crooks.

"They stole \$174,241,840.14," Senator Cuervo told us, in revealing the machinery of the crime. "That's all we could definitely pin on them. That we know for sure. But my opinion is that they got a lot more. Maybe as much as \$300,000,000. It was surely the most colossal crime in history."

The crime was colossal, but it was not complicated. It was, in its way, a work of art, a masterpiece of crookery.

THE GRAND PLAN of the theft — the Havana criminal court lists it as "Case 82" — emerged from the strange brain of a kindly, smiling super-crook named Manuel José Aleman. His was the master mind of "Case 82"; he hatched it and executed it. And, in a sense, the man Aleman is even more fantastic than the crime Aleman. Aleman appears to have been some new kind of maniac — a psychotic so far unreported by the various head doctors of the Jung, Adler, or Freud schools. It is not easy to get a true picture of the man. His former colleagues in Havana are naturally not at all inclined to talk about him. And the legend of Aleman, which

has spread over all of South and Central America, tends to obscure his real personality. But there is one fact that definitely emerges from the whole picture. Aleman apparently hatched his prodigious plot because he liked to make presents to people. Most crooks steal because they want to take. Aleman stole, mostly, because he wanted to give.

To understand how Aleman could have pulled off his fabulous job it is first necessary to understand the average Cuban's feeling for money. He does not trust a check. To him it's a suspicious, possibly worthless, piece of paper. He buys and sells for cash, settles his debts for cash, and most important of all, pays his taxes in cash. A Cuban tax collector really collects — pesos and centavos, which he puts into a little leather bag and later brings to the Cuban Treasury Building, at the corner of Cuba and Obispo streets in downtown Havana. The Treasury building, where one of the fantastic acts of "Case 82" was played, is a rambling, massive structure whose architecture might be described as Late Nothing. It was built forty-eight years ago for the Banco de Cuba and, at the time, its architect told an admiring public that "this is one bank that can't be cracked." In view of what happened, that remark will live.

The funds in the Treasury are stored there in cash. In Washington, the "coffers" of the Treasury are

merely a figure of speech; the money is recorded in books. But in Cuba, the coffers were just that. The Treasury was full of dough, sugar, moola — real money that could be spent in bars and restaurants, at race tracks or on the velvety sin of Havana's famed *maisons fermées*.

On that humid day in October, the vaults of the Treasury were literally bulging. One of the four vaults was so full that its door could not be closed. Money flowed out into the corridor, and it was necessary to keep a twenty-four-hour guard on it.

At 1:25 that afternoon, four green GM trucks marked "Ministry of Education" rumbled into the Treasury courtyard. It was quite normal for trucks to come in like this, and none of the guards saw anything suspicious — or so they later said. Some men — including those "pen-niless" loungers in the bars — got out of the trucks. Each of them was carrying a suitcase. Accounts vary, but there seems to have been at least a dozen of them. In any case, and unthinkable as it may seem, one guard, a banjo-eyed former sugar worker named Juan Gomez, greeted the men. "Hi, hombres," he said, winningly. "What're you going to do? Rob the Treasury of the pesos?"

The leader of the men smiled his warm smile, a smile familiar to every Cuban. "*Quien sabe?*" he said, and strode by. "Who knows?" This man

was Aleman — a short, almost doll-like figure with a round boy's face — and his presence on the trucks was a gesture of infinite swagger. The man who was the greatest crook in history was also one of history's hammiest actors.

The men, led by the smiling Aleman, went directly to the vaults. No one could question Aleman's right to be there. He was Minister-without-Portfolio in the Cuban government, and he was also its strongest figure. He could sign orders for the release of money from the Treasury. The only unusual thing was that he should choose to strut across the stage himself.

The men calmly began filling their suitcases. They took everything that wasn't nailed down, but that was only because nothing *was* nailed down. If anything had been, they'd have grabbed that, too. They took peso notes, in denominations down to one. They took French francs and Portuguese escudos. They latched on to Italian lire and English sterling. They even scooped up \$2,700 worth of Russian rubles which had found their way into the treasury.

And as a final bit of insouciance, the boys grabbed just under \$19,000,000 in U.S. currency. The irony lay in the fact that Aleman had been inducing the Cuban government to buy these dollars, on the argument that this would strengthen Cuban currency.

They swept their way through the Treasury like vacuum cleaners, quickly and efficiently. Then they moved back onto their trucks and without a wrong turning, headed directly for Rancho Boyeros Airport.

Waiting at the airport was a chartered DC 3. Aleman and three henchmen got on it, taking only the American money. Later, little by little, the other currency was changed at various Cuban banks. All very legal. The plane took off for Miami, and landed. Since it was an international flight, American customs men asked if Aleman had anything to declare. No, he had not. Well, what was his cargo?

"United States currency," he said, smiling.

"What?" cried the customs men. "How much?"

"I'm not sure," he said. "But about \$19,000,000."

The customs men, certain that they were dealing with a madman, examined the suitcases, and there they saw it, neat and green. Aleman said he didn't have to declare it, but they said he must. Call Washington, he told them. They did, and Aleman was right. There is no law against importing American dollars into America—even nineteen million of them. Aleman had looked up the law.

Aleman was always friendly to newspaper reporters and later, in an interview with a Miami newspaper-

man, he was his usual affable self.

"How could you get so much money out of the treasury?" the baffled reporter asked.

"It was easy," Aleman said. "In suitcases."

MANUEL JOSÉ ALEMAN, who was to become one of the world's richest men, was born in the proper tradition: he was born poor, in 1903, in Havana. When he finished school—where he did brilliantly—young Aleman got a clerk's job in the Ministry of Education. He also got himself a wife and child. His salary at its height was \$153 per month, which isn't much for any man, let alone one who is apparently pathologically devoted to giving things away. For some twenty years Aleman sat at his little desk in the Ministry, and there is no evidence that during this time he hoisted so much as one hot peseta.

But from the audacity of his later coups, maneuvers which obviously required detailed, glacially detached planning, he must have been thinking very profoundly about those overflowing coffers in the Treasury building, dozing in the sun at the corner of Cuba and Obispo streets. That money and Señor Aleman would have a rendezvous. The only question seemed to be when. The Hollywood touch was lacking.

However, that touch came, and it came in the outlandish person of

a huge bulldog of a woman named Paulina Grau Alcina. She was the sister-in-law of a Cuban physician who had turned politician, Dr. Grau San Martin, another almost unbelievable figure in the almost unbelievable "Case 82." Dr. San Martin has many eccentricities, but perhaps his most peculiar is a total disinclination to speak in anything but parables. As one Cuban who can speak English put it recently, "It's too bad there is no word in Spanish for 'double-talk' because without that word it is impossible to describe San Martin." However, the Cuban electorate seemed to like parables, because in 1944 San Martin was elected President of the Republic.

THE HOUR HAD STRUCK. Aleman went to Paulina and kissed her hand. He also flattered her and smiled his boyish, winning smile. What could she do for him, the fat lady sighed. Oh, nothing much. Perhaps a little promotion. There was a job vacant as Director of the Polytechnic School. There, Aleman promised, he could really do something for *la Republica* and its new government. But of course, the President's sister assented. And Aleman was in. It was a field promotion: from clerk to Director, from private to general. And being a general, Aleman began to plan his war. The stronghold to be taken was the treasury, and to take it Aleman mustered up an army.

It was an underground army, but it came marching out from below with astonishing precision. In his new post Aleman had made friends. He talked, cajoled, beguiled, bewitched, and won over colleagues and subordinates, some 2,000 in all, and then he was ready for the next sortie.

Again he went to Paulina and kissed her hand, which now had a brilliant solitaire on it. Not an engagement ring, just a present. "I have worked hard at my new job," Aleman explained. "Could I be rewarded with another appointment?" The appointment came through in 1947, making Aleman Minister of Education.

The war was on. According to Senator Pelayo Cuervo, Aleman was able to milk the Ministry of Education of \$65,000,000 during his tenure of office there. Now he had friends and could buy influential people.

He soon got himself a roving assignment — Minister-without-Portfolio in the government of Dr. Grau San Martin — and proceeded to change the nature of Cuba's tax structure. By using his men, he changed it from a tax system for Cuba to a tax system for Aleman. An Aleman collector simply went to a taxpayer owing, say, \$15,000. "Look here, chico," he would say. "We think you're over-assessed. Your proper tax is only \$10,000." The taxpayer agreed, delightedly.

"Simply pay me the \$10,000," the collector would add, "and I will give you this receipt." The taxpayer would notice that the receipt was for only \$4,000.

"But this is for \$4,000. And I've paid you \$10,000. What happens to the other \$6,000?"

"A wise man," the tax collector would say, "might consider the \$5,000 he has just saved. As for the \$6,000 . . . *quien sabe?*"

Who knows? In a short while, everybody knew. The \$6,000, less commissions to collectors and various functionaries within the Aleman group, went to Aleman. The \$4,000 went to the Treasury, but only temporarily. Aleman had his eye on that as well.

The whole assessment transaction was legal. An assessor has the right to assess, and to change assessments. It was all carried out without any force or violence. There were no gang murders, no shakedown threats. Everything was sweet and serene, and the warm Cuban sun poured down its benevolence on the business transactions between two Cuban gentlemen.

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING of his acquisition of wealth, Aleman began giving things away. He started on an inexpensive level: he began by giving away roses. Not only to women, but to everybody. And not by the dozen, but by the gross. Astonished buddies of Ale-

man on coming back to their offices after lunch found they could hardly shove their way in past the flowers. Wives of his associates would look on helplessly as the florist boy staggered in with more roses. All during the summer the homes of Aleman's friends smelled like chorus girls' dressing rooms. Then, suddenly, something that possibly the master mind had not anticipated happened. Roses simply went out of season. There were no more. And Cuba has far too few greenhouses to be able to satisfy Aleman's princely demands. He had to think of something else. And he did.

In the winter of 1947-48, Aleman bought forty-one new American automobiles and proudly presented them to his chums. In the beginning, the cars were popular-priced models, but later, as his strange mania began to take on more generous proportions, Aleman gave away Cadillacs, which in Cuba cost around \$6,000 each. People friendly to Aleman soon had Cadillacs coming out of their ears.

Throughout this period there is no evidence that Aleman did anything with his own share—the lion's share—except give it away and use it to make a few wise and undercover investments for his family.

He certainly did not spend money on himself. He had no fancy girls, gave no fancy parties. He even continued living in the old Aleman

home in Havana. His wife, neighbors noticed, did not suddenly appear with blonde hair and a wardrobe of scarlet frocks.

But though Aleman himself did not spend his newly-gained money egotistically, some of his henchmen did. They can be said to have gone wild. They bought homes with swimming pools—these boys who didn't know how to swim. They chartered planes and flew pretty American party girls over from Miami. They went to Mexico, and they went to Paris. They went to Havana's race track every day and they ate only at the best restaurants. Business at Havana's flossiest bordello, the Casa Marina, became so brisk that the management was able to install air conditioning in some of the rooms. This note of modernity in the world's oldest profession turned out rather dismally, however, because the girls, accustomed to plying their art in the tropical Cuban heat, complained that they caught cold when the air conditioner was on. The management sadly had to shut it off.

Up to now Aleman's gifts had been expensive, even lavish. But they had been uninspired. However, he noticed that one of his pals was spending a lot of time in a night club in Arroyo Arena, outside Havana. So Aleman gave him the night club; the man still has it. But the thought may have crossed Aleman's twisted brain that what he

was giving away, any really rich man could give away. What could he give away that even the Maharajah of Baroda couldn't give away? He came upon a brilliant answer. To one of his fans he gave the baseball club of Marianao, a good, hard-playing club which is worth at least a half million dollars and which is the idol of the baseball-wacky Cubans.

BUT AT THIS TIME, just when Aleman apparently had all the material security any man could ever dream for, a new actor entered the fantastic Aleman drama. And this actor, like the other Aleman hiring-collectors, was also a kind of collector. Though they didn't know it at the time, this actor was death. And he could not be bought off. Not even with \$174,241,840.14.

Sometime in 1948, Aleman contracted a rare brain disease, a kind of cerebral leukemia. It wasn't painful, but the patient suffered spells of fainting and mental unbalance. These grew progressively more frequent. The Cuban doctors examined Aleman, but they seemed unable to cure him, let alone halt the advance of the disease. He hastened to Miami, where American doctors experienced similar failures. Aleman asked the medical men if the disease would be fatal. They didn't know. Who could tell?

He returned to Cuba just before Christmas of 1948. Something may

have told him that his curious brain was about to vanquish him. In any event, now he really began stealing, and stealing like a madman.

He pulled the old politician's trick of putting non-existent employees on the public payroll, but he did it with such a lavish hand that even his pals were shocked. He is thought to have put some 13,000 fictitious names on the payroll of the Ministry of Education alone. Then he got the Treasury to assign to the Ministry of Education the incredible sum of 2,000,000 extra pesos *per month* "to cover additional salaries and expenses." He even went so far as to run out of names, and in a moment of classic whim, hired a writer of Cuban pulp fiction simply to grind out new names for him.

He began frantically shipping money to various banks in North America, funds which it is hard to trace. One report has it that \$139,384 went to an account with the First National Bank of Boston, \$480,000 to the Bank of Nova Scotia, \$141,520 to the Royal Bank of Canada. For two million dollars he bought Cape Florida, a luxurious estate just outside Miami which reputedly belonged to the Capone interests. For his son he purchased the enormous baseball stadium in Miami, the most modern of its kind in the world. His wife received buildings along Miami's Biscayne Boulevard, where real estate values

are almost astronomical. Like a mad squirrel hiding nuts in trees, Aleman put away his money in a financial tangle of interlocking corporations.

Then, suddenly, he made a present — his biggest.

He gave the people of Cuba a \$50,000,000 hospital for children. And it was put up. Obviously, it was not his money he was giving to the people of Cuba; it was theirs. He was merely returning some of it. But he characteristically did not call it the "Aleman Hospital." It was called, simply, the Cuban Hospital for Children.

BUT THE SPIRIT OF ALEMAN WAS fading. He was ill, and he could devote less and less of his peculiar genius to politics. The San Martin government, under which he had grown so rich, was replaced by another government. Senator Cuervo started his investigations. The gates seemed to be closing on the super-rascal. But Aleman didn't give up.

Just before the government of Dr. Grau San Martin ended its term, Aleman phoned Señor Carlos Tristá, cashier of Havana's Customs House.

"I hear," Aleman said coyly, "that Customs is holding some \$8,000,000 in cash deposits." Yes, it was true. "I'm going to send a man around to pick up that money. I think it will be safer with us. Otherwise, someone might steal it." What could Señor Tristá do?

Aleman seemed to have a mystic and irresistible power in the government. In a futile gesture, the Customs House cashier asked Aleman's messenger for a receipt. With an ironic smile, the messenger scrawled on a piece of paper: "Received with thanks from Señor Tristá the sum of eight million dollars." Then he left, taking the money with him in one of the green GM trucks which had also served for the coup on the treasury.

But the receipt remained, and it became one of the prize pieces of evidence in the investigation started soon after by Senator Pelayo Cuervo Navarro.

CUERVO IS THE ACTOR who reads the epilogue in this incredible drama. A successful Havana lawyer, he had been watching Aleman's activities with almost fascinated horror. He called on his friends to help him stop this gargantuan fraud, but they were reluctant: "Anyone who starts investigating Aleman or his friends is likely to be fed to the sharks around Morro Castle within twenty-four hours." Careful but unafraid, Cuervo called home his three strapping sons who had been studying English and commando tactics at the Augusta Military Institute in Georgia. Working in three shifts, they served as Cuervo's bodyguards while he arranged midnight meetings with men who might give him information about Aleman's ac-

tivities. At first, evidence came in slowly. There was a sheet of paper slipped in between the shirts Senator Cuervo received from his laundry, naming some of Aleman's accomplices. And there were a few anonymous telephone calls: "If you look on the third shelf of room 64 in the Treasury building, you will find some of the forged records."

Soon the Senator had a whole room of his house in Vedado filled with papers, pictures, and notarized testimonies. He attempted to bring his case to court. But Aleman's army was feared in Cuba. One after another, the judges of the Second Section of Havana's tribunal declined to hear the case. Some removed themselves on grounds of personal prejudice. One even hurriedly married into Aleman's family, thus disqualifying himself.

At last Judge Justiniani, a fiery and fearless Cuban of Italian extraction, announced to a dumbfounded public that he would take on the case. Immediately, Cuervo, the accuser, started transferring the evidence from his villa to the Special Court House in Jesus del Monte, Havana's oldest section. There were 5,062 documents in all, and they were stuffed into filing cabinets, empty liquor cartons, and piled on tables and chairs in one of the judge's anterooms. Justiniani set a date for the first hearing.

And then José Manuel Aleman, who had meanwhile retired to his

recently purchased estate in Miami, started planning his last and most desperate coup. He was sick and weak, but night after night he sat up in his study, drawing plans, talking to tough-looking characters who had flown over from Havana for urgent conferences. Trusting nothing to chance, Aleman wrote down every detail of this campaign, which was to be his last. Each man received instructions as detailed as an Eisenhower attack order.

AT TWO A.M. on July 22, 1950, five gunmen walked into the room where Cuervo's evidence had been stacked. The papers were guarded by two members of the National Police. One of them claims he slept through the entire adventure. The other, Sergeant Francisco Figueras, was one of those who had received instructions from Aleman. Quietly, grimly, he helped his accomplices pack the accusation papers into suitcases they had brought along. The same strong, brown suitcases, by the way, which had been used for the haul from the treasury. Within twenty minutes the suitcases were packed and carried out to a waiting truck—a green GM truck, naturally.

And the next morning, Judge Justiniani sadly announced that every last shred of evidence against Aleman had been stolen.

But Aleman did not hear that announcement. Some weeks previously, having completed all the plans and personally briefed his men in their last mission, Aleman had died of cerebral leukemia.

By dash, by smiles, by brains, he had become the richest man in Cuba and the architect of history's greatest theft. Even if he had lived, he might have escaped arrest. For he is a legend today, and who can arrest a legend?

Late last spring, the indefatigable Senator Cuervo had managed to reassemble most of the 5,062 pieces of evidence for Judge Justiniani, and an official indictment was handed down, naming ex-President Grau San Martin, Aleman, and dozens of his accomplices. Dr. Grau, on hearing of the indictment, prepared another parable in which he spoke feelingly of Judas and added: "Gratitude which greatens the elevated spirit humiliates the disloyal one." He said he would welcome a trial, that it would prove his innocence. But the likelihood of a trial seems remote, at present. After all, the very scope of the crime provokes some kind of admiration, and Aleman with his open-handed generosity was a real "Caballero." Did Aleman do wrong? they ask in Havana. And they shrug their shoulders.

Quien sabe? they say.

In Our Readers' Opinion

» Last week I purchased my first copy of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY*. I cannot begin to express my appreciation of this worthy little volume. I was particularly impressed by your editorial entitled, "This Is the Pivotal Year." Surely all America is impressed by this pointed and unbiased summation of our present political position. This editorial might well be stapled to every signboard and post across the land.

Yet I feel that you overestimate the importance of the November election. I am a firm believer in the intrinsic moral strength of the people of this country. They are good people; sincere and earnest lovers of liberty.

Sadly, though, ours is the age of the minority. It is obvious that our present situation is the result of the work of a wantonly selfish minority. . . . If, then, these unsatisfactory conditions were brought about by a minority, a minority can effect the change we so desperately need. . . .

Democracy being what it is, confusion is the nemesis of all liberty. And today confusion reigns supreme. It is the duty of every American citizen to work diligently to lift this veil of confusion. I am sure the editors of *THE MERCURY* are well aware of this. I only hope that this letter will help to encourage you as you continue to support this cause, the cause of freedom.

CHARLES T. STEEDLE, JR.
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

» *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* has been brought back up to standard. It is a ray of hope — and Truth — in a day when much of the country's journalistic talent is given over to sweet wind, whitewash and political propaganda.

KARR SHANNON
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

» I consider THE MERCURY a very courageous magazine, and applaud the Editor for the candid revelations of the crooked or stupid actions of public men and government officials. These things the public should know.

LOUISE R. HICKS

WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

» I have admired you and your magazine for some time. You have intelligence, zest, guts, and a devil-may-care attitude that permits your invasion of sacred precincts with a happy shout and a crusader's use of the broadsword.

R. P. BRONSON

MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA

» According to your opinion it seems that you do not believe that the President is honest.

How about you? Are you honest with the people of this United States when you publish and try to sell for \$3.00 your sheet? When does a democracy cease to be a democracy? Does it come to pass when its people, some of them, feel that they have the full right to come before the people of a democracy and sell for \$3.00 a booklet that might cause someone to lose faith in these United States, to such a degree that this United States could cease to be a democracy?

Could it be that maybe there are some people who do things that are even worse than not being honest and not paying debts, when they do and say things that may cause a whole country to go Communist.

I really believe you need \$3.00.

CASH RAMEY

CLOVIS, NEW MEXICO

Don't we all? [ED.]

» I challenge you to tell some of us subscribers what THE MERCURY stands for in the field of domestic U. S. affairs and what THE MERCURY stands for as regards our foreign relations. . . .

I am beginning to think that in spite of some experience in show business I have been sucked in by ballyhoo. I subscribed to THE MERCURY in the first place because someone handed me one of those reprints, "Is President Truman an Honest Man?" It is pretty hard on

my self-respect to have to admit that I fell for this come-on without even stopping to ask whether THE MERCURY was not perhaps against the present administration and for the pink internationalism which is perhaps our greatest danger.

How do you explain away that "Revolt Along the Nile" article in the February issue in which you say that "the upheaval is the West against the Middle East," a doubly misleading statement, and use such words as "Overcrowded, poverty-ridden, sick and starving" [referring to the people of the Middle East]. . . .

All right, Mercury, what do you say about it? Are you for dollar-scattering leftist internationalism? If so, convert those words into whatever smooth euphemisms you choose, but let us have the answer; a subscriber is entitled to know what he has bought.

DONALD B. PHILLIPS
ADAMSTOWN, MARYLAND

The answer is "No!" [ED.]

» Yes, I think well enough of THE MERCURY to take more of the same, thank you. This, largely because it sees through the combination of stupidity and criminality yclept "New Deal" and the misnamed "Fair Deal," and other buncoes being worked upon a slowly awakening populace. . . .

There's a vast field of "stupidity, hypocrisy and falsehood" upon which THE MERCURY can operate with its caustic discernment. Multitudes of fakirs, social, political, even pretending religious, needing the scalpel applied. But don't let your zeal run away with a sense of the fundamental realities. After all, wisdom wasn't born just yesterday.

M. D. ABER
WARRENSBURG, MISSOURI

» My salary each month barely covers expenses and taxes, mostly to those rascals in Washington, but life would be a lot more dreary without your publication. Wish more people were in the mood for it, also that many who are in the right mood could see a few copies for encouragement.

D. LEAVENWORTH
ELDRED, NEW YORK

If I Were MAO TSE-TUNG

Edward Hunter

Hong Kong

IF I WERE Mao Tse-tung, I would be satisfied with the progress to date of the All-Asia War. I would be dissatisfied with conditions inside China — they have been somewhat less favorable than I expected. But I would also be comforted by knowing that my master, Stalin, was surely pleased with my success in Asia. This was the task assigned me, and I believe I have done it well.

That is how Mao Tse-tung is probably soliloquizing today. An appraisal of the situation in Asia

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Edward Hunter, the well-known Far Eastern correspondent, has written extensively on the Communist advance in Asia. His recent book, Brainwashing in Red China, is a penetrating study of the methods and manners of Red psychology.

through his eyes would go far to show us where we actually stand, and at this stage of Western confusion, could give us a basis for our planning. We could thereby use the enemy's strategists against himself. Our innocents in the international arena, lacking any other measure, might at least use Soviet Russia's preferences and dislikes as a guide in reverse.

If we looked over the Asia situation through Chinese Communist eyes, the first thing we would see would be Asia as a whole, instead of focusing on Korea, Indo-China, Malaya, Burma, Indonesia, India, or any other single area that appears most menaced at the moment. We would regard each of these countries as only one sector on the long, single front, and we would understand

that nothing was decisive on any of these sectors except as it influenced the whole front.

If I were Mao Tse-tung, so long as I could maintain turbulence in any one sector of the Far East, I would consider I was getting ahead. What happened in any one sector would merely constitute a lull or a battle, not a truce or a war. I would know that even a startling defeat in any one sector need not be final, but only a fluctuation on a war front, like the temporary loss of the Philippines to Japan in World War Two.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE is an all-Asia physical and economic bleeding operation. This is fundamental strategy, to which everything else is subordinated. So long as this strategy can be continued, failure on any sector can be accepted by Mao with equanimity, as of diversionary importance alone. If this strategy were upset, success in any one sector would be equally incomplete (as in Germany's conquest of Norway).

Today this bleeding tactic is being pursued everywhere according to plan. Malaya is an excellent example of how skillfully it has worked. Rarely were enough Britons killed on any one day to warrant even a five-line item in an English, much less an American, newspaper. The small figure involved kept the Anglo-Saxon public from realizing how critical the situation was. Mao knew

that these often were not just ordinary Britons who were being slain, who could be replaced by any national service draftee from home. They were, many of them, jungle specialists, who had spent years in that part of the world, were physiologically fitted for the highly individualistic disciplines of jungle life, had acquired facility in native tongues. One such officer can be the difference between the success or failure of an entire military campaign in Southeast Asia or the South Pacific.

Mao therefore knew why he deliberately kept his guerrilla forces in Malaya at a maximum of only a few thousand. That number was sufficient to keep the pot boiling, and yet not enough to arouse the West both to see through his quiet tactic, and do something about it.

The important thing was always to avoid the mistake of letting this situation become acute enough so that the West might catch on to the tactic and take action on a scale that would endanger its continuation. The setting had not yet been prepared for the *coup de grace* against the West by Mao Tse-tung's unbled "Big Brother."

Mao's goal, of course, as he and his Peking colleagues have often expressed it in Communist terminology, is the conquest of all Asia, as part of the encirclement and suffocation policy toward the main enemy, the United States.

So, if I were Mao Tse-tung, I would use all my acumen to maintain a balance. I would play the various sectors like a giant organ. I would arouse a feeling of encouragement when discouragement had become so serious as to threaten a drastic reaction. I would evoke a feeling of discouragement when the elation in turn had become equally menacing.

This is merely the extension to Asia as a whole of the military tactic that brought about the fall of the entire Chinese mainland. Malayan guerrillas were accordingly informed by their political commissars that no matter what their setbacks because of their inferiority in numbers and supplies the sacrifice was but temporary — for they were part of a tremendous front, which itself was only one of several fronts, with the vast Soviet Russian military strength in reserve.

And this strength, Mao has assured his sectors in such isolated areas as Malaya, the Philippines, Indonesia, is invincible. For jungle fighters this is the most convincing of all arguments. This is the kind of pep talk they fall for. Let the Western intellectuals be above such sentimental nonsense; Mao knows better. He knows how to exploit the sacrificial trait inherent in young men and women.

If I were Mao Tse-tung, Korea would seem to be a heads-I-win, tails-you-lose proposition. Of course,

I would prefer to keep the truce negotiations going on indefinitely for their war-of-nerve effect, as well as their value in the slow bleeding of the enemy. But I would be prepared for the fact that eventually the United States would call a halt on all the talkie-talk. So I would be satisfied with the victory I had gained so far, and agree to suspend the shooting stage of the Korean fighting as a small sacrifice on my part to avoid arousing the enemy to the definite, over-all showdown that Moscow obviously wanted me to avoid.

AS MAO TSE-TUNG, I would add up the Korean accounts as a clear victory on my side. Among other things, my countrymen, even many of those Chinese most opposed to my regime and to Communism, could not help but feel a thrill of pride over the fact that Chinese soldiers, men of Chinese blood like themselves, had held up the combined forces of the United Nations and kept the powerful American Army, Navy, and Air Force from driving them out of Korea. Almost every Asian, in fact, would have a tone of pride in his voice as he criticized my intervention. The help to me in building up the morale of Asia's sincere and well-meaning nationalists was incalculable. It tipped the scales. This would remove from my mind any worry about the technical legality of the thirty-eighth

parallel and the indubitable fact that the Americans had forced the Communists back and beyond that parallel. I would know that this was not how it looked to my fellow Asians. What they saw was that yellow-skinned, slant-eyed soldiers had held the white race at bay. This racial slant was dynamite in my hands. The Japanese had laid the framework for its use in their half-century-long Pan Asia Movement. I expect to reap the harvest of my attempt.

IF I WERE MAO TSE-TUNG, I would feel particularly confident over my progress in Indonesia, probably the world's most naturally rich country, where the Western fable of Jack's seed becoming a giant beanstalk overnight almost seems true. The Chinese minority controlled the financial structure of this inexperienced republic, with all the opportunities this gave for influencing politics and controlling the press. Civil strife consequently ensued. In this instance I understood, however, that the time had not yet come for insurrections on the Filipino scale.

I learned from the Japanese how to keep a new country from ever settling down, by supporting any side in any controversy just enough to give it new life whenever it was about to be liquidated. If you keep this up long enough, any government will collapse. Had I not as-

sisted in the Japanese application of this technique to China? Given time, this technique will work in Indonesia too.

I feel equally at ease over ultimate results in Thailand. At my instigation, the pot was simmering there. The Chinese minority was in absolute control of economics, also able to pull strings in Parliament enough to stymie an undesired project if it couldn't defeat it entirely.

I had several million wartime refugees from Indo-China living up near that border, close to China. These were of Chinese blood, and felt isolated among the Thais, and so long as I didn't spread my propaganda openly in the Thai language, which these border folk didn't understand, anyway, I was not being interfered with.

Burma, I know, is following India's lead, and India is led by simple propaganda pressures, by appeals to India's baser racial and bazaar instincts, so long as these are expressed in pious eloquence. The Indian government, of course, must not be embarrassed by a direct frontal attack. I would get nowhere, for the Indian glibness with language can explain just about everything away. Is Tibet a better example? Surely nobody in Asia missed its meaning. Behind the screen of the pseudo-liberal vocabulary I detest, I was able to take over all of Tibet. India's peace talk sounded fine in Western ears. There

was no war, was there? And I got what I was after.

THE AMERICAN AID PROGRAM constituted another field which I, as the leader of Soviet Asia, viewed with satisfaction. Moscow had given me the lead by boldly attacking American aid as an imperialist trick intended to hoodwink the receiver into servility. Nobody likes to have to receive aid. If there is no other expedient but to do so, if the receiver can be given the chance to malign the giver as impelled by a selfish, ulterior purpose, he can perhaps persuade himself that he is doing the giver a favor by taking his money and gifts. With American help this has been easy to manipulate. For the Americans were readily persuaded that it would be crude of them to claim credit for such activity, that they would be sissies if they gave the impression there was any idealism attached to it — although they must be aware of the magic the word “spiritual” carries in the East. It was simple, therefore, to brand them sheer materialists whose every move was calculated in dollars and cents.

This led naturally to the most effective slogan in my economic bleeding tactic, the one that did the greatest damage to the purpose of the whole aid program. This was the “no strings attached” cry. Whoever heard before, in the history of the world, in relations between indi-

viduals or nations, of anybody or any organization or country giving a loan without some string attached? The use to which a loan is to be applied is always part of the deal, whether friendly or commercial. No individual would think of making a loan if he did not feel assured that the money would be used for the purpose indicated, and that it surely would not be used against the interests of the giver. The “no strings attached” idea was a stroke of genius.

In another little maneuver of mine, America was also helpful beyond my highest expectations. America agreed to grant aid only on a government-to-government basis, instead of allowing American enterprise to develop personal initiative among the peoples of the newly freed lands — for example, by facilitating loans from American enterprises to these individuals, with the consent of their governments, with provisions for these enterprises to belong to those persons once the loans are paid back. This was nearer to socialism than capitalism, but nevertheless I succeeded in branding it as capitalist imperialism and thus the Americans got all the obloquy connected with that term without the advantages of an actual promotion of private enterprise.

I have succeeded in turning “capital” into a dirty word — a four-letter sort of word — in making capitalism a synonym for imperial-

ism, and identifying both in an Asian's mind with the word America, so that he always thinks of the three together. This is no small victory; maybe my most spectacular.

This tactic has been so successful that throughout 1950 in Indonesia, suffering acutely from lack of capital, without which the country is doomed to become a banana republic ripe for Communism, not a single American private project could be put across, and virtually everything American done through government channels had to be concealed from the Indonesian people. This so-called "neutralism" or "independent policy" was greatly to my advantage.

IF I WERE MAO TSE-TUNG, I would be encouraged, too, by the manner in which the impression has spread in Asia, especially in countries still outside the Soviet bloc, that the basic conflict between two opposite ways of life is merely the rivalry of two great Powers, and that the safest and wisest procedure is to steer clear of becoming involved. Such a policy, followed by new nations born out of the war, jealously striving to guard their hard-won sovereignties, was no small victory. Their government leaders know that to join the Soviet orbit would be their suicide. They have no alternative but to take America's side. But they aren't doing so. Could any victory be the more pro-

nounced? Encouraged by the "no strings attached" psychology into believing they can have their cake and eat it too, they are easily penetrated from the inside, for I — Mao — have no hesitancy in branding my side all good and the other side all evil, threatening them with dire consequences if they run counter to my wishes. Why should they, when my enemy makes the way so easy for them?

So long as this goes on, I can relax comfortably in my Forbidden City quarters. These destructive slogans, "no strings attached" and "non-interference," have become so successful as to sound quite natural even to the Americans, who to my eternal amazement will fall for any apt phrase, so long as it has a double-talk meaning that can lull them into the prideful calm of being "sugar daddy" to the world. This pat label, "sugar daddy," for instance, is used by Americans boastfully, although it denotes a sucker. Yes, the Americans have given me a valuable insight into the most vulnerable aspect of their character.

The satisfactory progress of the American aid program is also evidenced by the indignation and fury I hear about among the recipients over any suggestion to discontinue the aid, and the insistence that once given, the United States has the responsibility of continuing it in ever-increasing amounts. A vested interest is being developed in Amer-

ican aid. The original American idea, of course, was to undertake a pump-priming operation for long-range planning. Our objective was to convert this into a simple dole, of a short-range nature, whenever we failed to prevent it entirely. Whoever receives a dole is likely to become angry and turn on the giver if the hand-outs cease while he still needs them. My friends can make sure that the need remains constant.

There was no great difficulty in encouraging a rivalry between the recipients, giving one the impression that the other was receiving more. How well this operates was shown on such occasions as when the British Commonwealth nations attempted to vote their gratitude to the United States for aid given, and Pakistan in effect vetoed the proposal out of pique because it considered it had not received a proportionately large enough donation. This sort of irritation is all to the good.

Perhaps my most spectacular propaganda victory during the past year has been my nullification of the value of the atom bomb to the Americans. Wholly by psychological warfare, I have made it impossible — impossible, I say — for the United States to use the atom bomb in Asia. I am confident of this. The Stockholm peace petition, which I made sure was signed by almost everybody in China, several times by many, and which I have loudly

publicized throughout Asia, has created a state of mind so antagonistic to the dropping of the atom bomb by American troops that the American government would not dare use it for fear that whatever advantage this new military weapon gave it in any one war sector would be lost by the violent reaction of the people elsewhere.

Stalin and I have even enlisted America's European allies as a party to this pressure. I am confident, therefore, that I can proceed with my All-Asia War without any fear that this most deadly of modern military weapons can be taken out of cold storage by the Americans. Meanwhile, I can look ahead with the confidence that our side will have no such scruples if "Big Brother" is called in to help us. Why should I hesitate; why worry?

AS I SURVEY THE ASIA SITUATION, I come upon another great advantage for my side. I need have no qualms about expending lives. Let the West, with its small population fear to utilize its manpower the same as it would any other piece of equipment. Westerners are, after all, individualists; I am not. This is my form of birth control, and it has the added advantage of achieving a political purpose. I can reap a propaganda harvest, too, by passing the onus for the wholesale destruction of lives onto my enemy. The simple-minded people who must die will

seek a scapegoat, and being powerless in my direction, will vent their frustration against the West in the form of mad hatred. We have seen this already in Korea. This, on top of washed brains, is unbeatable. I can use coolie labor, too, that the West does not possess, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of coolies, from sundown to dawn and dawn to sundown, their shoulders bent under the weight of war supplies for my Indo-Chinese allies, or any others. I can use this excess population like limitless processions of ants going over the hills, loading them with supplies and walking them along thin, almost inaccessible paths. Such ant lines are inconspicuous, unlike supplies sent by train, truck, ship, or plane.

THUS SUMMARIZING the Asia situation, I can feel sure of myself, completely sure of myself, through all of Asia.

Yet not through all of Asia! Funny that I should feel most concerned over the country where I have achieved my most overwhelming victory, China. Surely my thought reform campaigns, which the people so understandably call brain-washing, which makes minds too tired to resist ideas that serve my purpose; my land reform, which liquidates all those who manage to rise out of the common level to a point where bourgeois sentiments might creep back into them; my

orchestration of the intellectuals, which gives each his pin-pointed role in my society; my anti-corruption campaigns, that permeate all ranks of my party; the donation drives that drain away money people might spend on personal comfort — the dangerous seed of individualism; my production drives that keep all hands busy and bodies too fatigued to get into mischief; and my absorption of all students in an educational system that is actually a mighty recruitment campaign, during which they hear and learn only what is best for them to believe.

Surely all of this should make my land the safest spot in Asia for communism. But it is not. In spite of this tremendous superiority I possess in the tools that control mind and body, reactionary elements persist. Bandits keep appearing in the most unlikely places.

Give me time, and I shall crush them all. This is what I require, time, during which I would not be interfered with in my work within China's vast mainland. Granted this, I cannot lose. I cannot push the masses too far, too fast. Too fast would be disastrous. By every psychological tactic, I must avoid this mistake of pushing people that little bit too much which makes the difference between indifference and desperation.

Who would have believed that so few years after I had the mainland

of China all to myself there would be bandit-suppression drives on so wide a scale, and anti-corruption campaigns in every locality? Can it be that the enemy, too, has thought of this tactic of keeping the pot boiling? Surely not; the enemy is too dumb, too permeated by criss-cross currents of petty bourgeois sentimentalism and legalisms to be able to do so, even if it wished. His liberal traditions make it impossible for him to implement such a policy. No, I can feel safe; perfectly safe, in my China. What am I worrying about?

Doesn't Moscow show me the way? Hasn't the Kremlin sent tens of thousands of Soviet Russians to China to guide us? Hasn't Stalin achieved socialism in his own country, so that he is ready to start toward the ultimate goal of communism? We are just striving toward socialism. Aren't we Chinese, as taught in our textbooks, justified in feeling that the greatest patriotism a Chinese can demonstrate for his country would be to support Soviet Russia in all matters? We live or die with Stalin.

Soviet Russian advisers are perfectly right in instructing us Chinese in detail on how to live our lives and how and where to die.

I wonder, though, I wonder if I would have felt this way almost a quarter of a century ago, when I led my 8,000-mile Long March? I couldn't undertake such a march

today. I am too old; look at my face. My face is flabby now. Like a woman's face. No, I could not undertake such a march today.

If I were the young man I was almost a quarter of a century ago, and the Soviet Russians had taken the control of China in the way they have today, would I have consented? Would I have revolted?

WHAT AM I THINKING ABOUT?
How can I allow such a thought to enter my head? My career is behind me, and I will go down in history on this past. Could I voluntarily denounce my whole past, like those Kuomintang lackeys I put on exhibition in self-accusation trials? No, I am Stalin's, his forever, inextricably bound to him by the years. He is my leader.

I have always been a Stalinist. Those clever Americans who rewrote my writings and misquoted me to conceal my indelible link to Stalin did their job well. But they gave a false impression of me to the Western world.

What is this going through my mind? How can I permit such thoughts to seep into my head, here in this comfortable salon in the Imperial City, even for a second?

I wonder if subversive thoughts like this ever enter Stalin's mind. Does he ever toy with the thought that he, too, might revolt? Against whom, or what? He, too, like me, may feel a prisoner at times.

Crazy ideas! Maybe a brain-washing from time to time would do me good, too. Maybe everybody needs a brain-washing, everybody.

Can anybody be trusted? How can anybody be trusted if even I can think a subversive thought? How can anybody be trusted?

Everybody's brain must be re-formed. That is not enough; everybody's brain must be re-reformed, and re-reformed again. Everybody's. Nobody can be trusted. We must work fast. We are fighting against time. We must work fast, faster, always faster.

If even I can have a subversive thought, or Stalin himself, then the

only safety is in the purge, in the purge of the masses and in the purge of party ranks, in brain-washing between purges, and brain-washing simultaneous with purges.

Aren't all people human? Aren't all humans only clay? Dialectical materialism proves that all people are no more than clay. How can any human being be trusted? Faster . . . faster . . .

Yes, if I were Mao Tse-tung, this is how I would think. This is what would go through my mind.

I am not Mao Tse-tung; true enough. But I, like he, am human, and all humans are susceptible to human thought.

The Ties of Self-interest

Politically the ties between Communist Russia and Communist China are closer and older than those between Moscow and any other Communist country, or foreign Communist Party. The Chinese Communist Party for more than two decades has proved itself in both word and deed more completely subservient to Moscow than any other . . .

The leaders of Communist China are obviously bound to Soviet Russia by their interests as well as by their ideology. Both the tremendous gains they can expect to win by maintaining their quarter-century ties with Russia, and the certainty that they could no more hope to survive if Soviet Russia went down to defeat, than Japan could survive the collapse of Nazi Germany, link the Chinese Communists to their Russian mentors by the strongest of all ties: self-interest and fear of destruction.

FREDA UTLEY, *in THE CHINA STORY*, Henry Regnery, 1951

PORTRAIT OF A HILL-BILLY

James Hines

CERTAIN SECTIONS of our country are so far back in the sticks that the hoot-owls court the chickens and the natives use 'possums for watchdogs. The natives are called hill-billies. Just what is a hill-billy? Well, I'll try to explain by describing Mr. Ike Snoddy, and what his life in the Kentucky hills is like.

Now, I definitely am *not* poking fun at Ike. I wouldn't dare to attempt such a thing if I could. Besides, who am I to cast ridicule at one of my own kind? Ike Snoddy's ancestors, like mine, came over here from England and Ireland, perhaps

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James Hines, who was introduced to our readers in the January issue, was born and brought up in the Kentucky hills. It is of that section and the people he knows there that he likes best to write.

on the Mayflower, settled in Virginia and the Carolinas for a time, and later came into the Kentucky hills, where they have since remained. Let me say right now that I consider Ike Snoddy the salt of the earth. May his tribe increase.

Ike Snoddy is a sharecropper. That is to say, Mr. Snoddy farms a small piece of land on shares with the landowner. He is the head of the Snoddy family, and sire of a numerous brood of youngins, as all children are called in this section of the country.

Mr. Snoddy's very latest were twins, both boys, named Isaac and Israel — but Ike isn't exactly religious. On the contrary, he is known as a pretty fair drinker, and a whole lot better than a green hand at poker — stud and draw.

It is said in the neighborhood that "Miz" Snoddy never weans a baby "ontil she knows for shore that there is anuther one on the way, afeerd that she'd go dry."

Old "Doc" Byers, the only practicing physician within a radius of fifteen miles of Ike's ridge farm, was once heard to remark when speaking of Mr. Snoddy:

"Wal, one thing I'll say about Ike. He's shore a good Christian, least wise so far as carrying out the admonition of the Bible about multiplying and replenishing the earth. I kinda think he works overtime at it. Yeah, every time things begin to get tough and times hard, I can allus count on Ike for a job. He keeps me purty busy. Mrs. Snoddy can generally be counted on to have a new youngin about every wash day."

The doctor stroked his chin, then continued: "But one thing I'll have to say in Ike's favor. He shore don't owe me for one single youngin. He allus pays. Not allus money, of course. As I recollect it, when Lige, Ike's third-to-oldest boy, was borned, Ike gimme a side of bacon from one of his nut and coal eatin' razor back hogs. Yeah, Ike Snoddy is as honest as any man in these hills."

"My ole woman had a 'nuther youngin last night," Ike would proudly announce to someone around Horse Branch on the birth of a baby. "It come 'bout three o'clock this mornin'. Woke me right up out of

a deep sleep. Squalled like a panther. Wal, more hep in the crop for me."

AFTER HE'D PASSED the eleventh notch, Mr. Snoddy's "youngin' raisin'" caused considerable comment in the county. John Thornbury, owner of the hillside farm where Ike resides, had to make a special trip to see Ike about having so many children. Not that Mr. Thornbury thought it was really any of his "danged-fire" business, but like he said: "I *made* it my business, after I had to enlarge Ike's house three times to make room for more kids. After I made over the house the second time, Ike said he was goin' to cut down. Wal, then one youngin fell in the creek and drowned and another was et up by some hogs, and Ike said he had to replace 'em by having two more. Now he's gone and had twins, and there ain't no more room for 'em in the house. B'gad! Part of 'em will have to sleep up on the roof!"

The Welfare Bureau at Hartford, the county seat, had been helping Mr. Snoddy take care of some of the youngins whenever the strain of child-raising became too heavy on Ike's poor old work worn shoulders. "Now, Mr. Snoddy," the bureau told him bluntly and realistically, "we have been very sympathetic toward you. We've helped you a lot. We never expressed our opinions on your personal business before. But now we think we have

the privilege. The children keep coming and coming. They darken the sky like the locusts in Bible times. You know, Mr. Snoddy, we have other people to help besides you. May we suggest that you take extra precaution and decrease your birth rate?"

Ike, with his face burning, feeling that his personal pride was insulted, accused the welfare of "a-meddlin' in his affairs." He reared up his head very independent-like and proceeded to read the bureau off. "If you don't wanta hep me, you can go jump in Rough River," he gave them to understand. "I didn't ask for your hep anyway. Haw, Ike Snoddy can get by!"

For six months Ike went around Horse Branch bleating like a billy goat and telling all and sundry that "All them Welfare nit-wits is out for is to cut out the only pleasure I got in this whole world!"

Ike wouldn't let Mrs. Snoddy raise none of the children on a bottle, either. "No wonder this world's a-gettin' in sech a mess," he was once heard to remark in Bill Pierce's store in "The Branch." "Maws a-raisin' their youngins on cow and goat milk. Wild animal fluid! I tell you it's a-makin' the younger generation a passel of savages. Yessir, that's what it's a-doin'!"

Long hours of back-breaking toil in the hot and humid climate of the place where Mr. Snoddy lives, together with insufficient and im-

properly cooked food, have taken their toll on Ike Snoddy. He looks to be somewhere in his late thirties, but seems older. I always go slow in trying to guess the age of a hill-billy. I allow myself plenty of leeway, say ten or twelve years, either way, give or take; I have found this is the only safe way.

It is beyond the stretch of anybody's imagination to regard Mr. Snoddy as good-looking. On the contrary, Ike is downright ugly. I'll even go a bit further and say that Ike Snoddy is about the last word in human ugliness. In fact, if anyone had ever thought to promote a contest or to offer a prize for the "Champion All-Around Ugly Man of All-Time," I'd have been pleased to have had Mr. Snoddy as my entry. He'd have won easy, and "hands down." All others would have been simply "also-runs."

IKE WOULD BE a good six feet four inches, or better, if he would or could straighten up to his full and rightful height. But for Ike, that is an impossibility. A certain stoop, or roundness of the shoulders, reduces his height by at least three or four inches. The bulge of Ike's shoulders is like the bulge in a barrel or keg, and keeps him at about a quarter-stoop. His long, skinny neck is the color of a turkey gobbler's comb, and his head at the end of it sticks forward and bobbles about like that of a shite poke on a sand bar.

Ike has another peculiarity. He has a very, very large and prominent Adam's apple, that rises and falls like the tides of the ocean, only of course much more frequently, as he swallows or talks.

I can well remember how I've sat, fascinated, ever since I was a youngster, and watched Mr. Snoddy talk. When Ike talks, which is about all the time, or at least whenever he can drum up a listener, his neck is a show-spot. I have often sat spellbound and wondered just what in the world would have been the dire result if Ike Snoddy should have suddenly lost his uncanny ability to stop that Adam's apple of his on its upward flight. I would find myself conjecturing that if such a thing should ever occur, and he should fail to stop it at just the precise moment to prevent it from going on out through the top of his head, would it have just kept going on out through the top of his head and on upward and have finally disappeared altogether in the stratosphere, away up yonder in the blue firmament?

MR. SNODDY carries a look of perpetual surprise on his otherwise somewhat vacant-looking pan, and his mouth, when it is still, is always just about half agape. His eyes are a source of wonder to me. They are small, very small, and with a certain far-away and faded look, and they are rimmed about with just a suggestion of sparse, straw-

colored lashes. I believe they are just about the smallest eyes that I can ever recall having seen in the face of a human being. They remind me of two little black shoe buttons, the kind that used to grace the shoes of the would-be dudes and city-slickers who always made it their business to be on the town's depot platform each afternoon at 4:15 when old Number 25 high-balled into Horse Branch.

A drooping, walrus-like mustache, once brown in color, but now faded to a nondescript tint, somewhere between a blond and a roan, and liberally sprinkled with gray where its natural color can be distinguished through the tobacco juice stains, sets off Mr. Snoddy's face.

The mustache almost but not quite conceals a rather large and somewhat generous looking mouth. And as Ike works his jaws up and down, up and down, around and around, with the placid rhythm of a cow chewing her cud as he chews on his quid of homespun tobacco, occasionally you catch a glimpse of one or two badly discolored and snaggy teeth. And every so often Mr. Snoddy pauses to expectorate a long thin stream of amber at some mark. He could qualify as an expert marksman, especially at drowning a house-fly at fifteen paces. Ike, in my mind, is the undoubted champion tobacco spitter and the best marksman I ever saw. He is a wizard. And I've seen some good tobacco chewers

in these Kentucky hills. I might mention, just in an incidental way of course, that chewing tobacco is just about the only thing Mr. Snoddy can be rightfully accused of doing industriously.

Ike's chin is small and receding, but his nose more than counterbalances that particular deficiency of his countenance. It is large, what is known as the bulbous pattern, with overgrown nostrils. As Mr. Snoddy is somewhat afflicted with a sinus ailment, he is constantly sniffing like a rabbit.

IKE'S CLOTHING is almost as distinctive as his physique. He wears a pair of what has once been dark blue denim overalls. From numerous visits to the washtub, Ike's britches have faded to a faint sky-blue color, and to about the thickness and delicacy of a lady's cambric handkerchief, and they have shrunk a very appreciable amount. In fact, the shrinkage is so very noticeable that Ike's britches and the top of his brogans are hardly on speaking acquaintance. Thus, the very natural result is that Ike's pipe-stem-like ankles are on public exhibition, and the fact is exposed that he wears no socks.

His britches are held in place by a pair of faded red and green suspenders, or galluses, as they are sometimes called. The galluses, when they were new, years ago, when Ike got hitched, set him back at least

the trading value of a dozen and a half hen eggs at the country store.

A green and white checkered gingham shirt, evidently the handiwork of Mrs. Ike, covers Mr. Snoddy's upper body. The sleeves, like the britches legs, are rather shy as to length; and as a result, Ike's bony and reed-like wrists are also free of covering, other than a few reddish-colored hairs.

A wide-brimmed "sundown" straw hat, sometimes known as a "Jimmy," with a black shoe lace interwoven through its surface at the point of the hat where the brim begins and the crown stops, sits atop his not overly-large head. The hat, being about two sizes too large for Mr. Snoddy's little pimple of a head, rests on his large bony ears, causing them to stand out from the sides of his head like bat wings. Due to long exposure to the suns and rains of perhaps a dozen summers, the hat has long since lost all resemblance to its former shape and color. It now reminds one of a small, year-before-last strawstack or hayrick that has been worked on by the stock.

Ike's feet can hardly be classed as small or even medium. In fact, they are very large — size ten or eleven. For foot covering, Ike wears very substantial brogans, and they show much wear and tear. It would be a safe bet to say that Mr. Snoddy's shoes have never even seen a shoe brush since leaving the factory; and as far as blacking or polish is con-

cerned, he would not have any of that sissy stuff on his shoes. The tops are scratched to pieces, as Ike has to chase his cows out of the saw briar and sassafras thickets, where a rabbit cannot get through without tearing his hide, before he milks every night and morning.

Mr. Snoddy's mode of getting around is hardly what can be classed as walking. He leans forward, thrusts out his head, raises his feet high in the air and strides forward with a long swinging motion that covers ground in an amazing manner. I think he raises his feet so high in the air because he spends so much of his time following a plow furrow in rough ground, a place where, unless he raises his feet high, he is very likely to stub his toe on a root turned up by the plow.

AS I HAVE ALREADY POINTED OUT, Ike Snoddy isn't what would be properly termed a good Christian, leastwise not the hell-fire and preaching kind. But he can always be counted on, in time of trouble or sickness, to go to the assistance of a friend. Everybody looks upon the long, stooped-shouldered hill-billy as "a mighty good man and neighbor." But Ike attends strictly to his own business, and "makes dang shore that others keep their noses out'n hisn!"

Ike's feelings toward Elviry, "his woman," can hardly be classed as love. That is, as the term is generally

understood. He looks upon her as a number-one field hand, fully able, when not otherwise engaged in "youngin-bearin'," and in preparing his "vittles of wile-greens, corn pone, sow-belly, black-eyed peas, and yellor butter," as rightfully belonging in the field with him and the older youngins, "a-heppin' to make the crop." No, there is none of that "spiritual love" in Mr. Snoddy's make-up. Elviry means to him — mostly, one thing — the gratification of a certain sensual and animal lust. She is his "assistant" in increasing his numerous brood.

Ike manages, after a fashion, mostly by word of mouth, to keep at least part way abreast of the times. He knows, or at least has heard about the Korean trouble, and most certainly doesn't approve of it. He knows it is only a matter of time, probably a very short time, until Barlow, his "oldest youngin'," who is already registered, will be "cotched up in the draft" and probably be "sont over yander to Koo-rear," as Ike pronounces it, and he doesn't like that. "Naw-sir. Not by a jug-full. Where in the Sam Hill is this Koo-rear anyway? Why should we all be a-fightin' over there?"

Just what all the trouble is about, he doesn't know, of course, and as he expresses it, "Don't give a dang! Just sumthin' these skule educated dang fools got us all mixed up in with them there danged Koo-reans and Chinamans. It shore pears like

to me that this here United Nations stuff and war over there in Koo-rear is jist an excuse to raise our taxes and make it harder to make ends meet."

Ike remembers his grandfather's telling him about the Civil War, and about Quantrill's raid into Kentucky. His grandpa had "ben a soldier. But then that was right here at home. We weren't a-fightin' no dang squinchy-eyed heathen set. No siree. It were just a family fuss when Jeff Davis and Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson and a passel of Johnny Rebs got to kinda actin' up."

IKE WORRIES about "revenooers," Barlow being drafted, the Koo-rear' situation, eternal salvation, and whether Elviry is going to have another youngin. But one thing he never worries about is food, corn, molasses, and tobacco. So long as Elviry can gather a mess of "wile-greens" in the early spring months, mix up a batter of corn meal and make the meal "threesome" with a nice "heppin'" of sow-bosom, Ike feels everything is running under control.

For years Ike has always bragged that Elviry is "the best all-around picker of wile-greens that I ever seen or heerd tell of. Yessir, my ole woman is the best wile-green picker that you kin find on the face of the earth. After Elviry gathers her greens, she takes 'em and washes

'em nice and clean in about five waters. Than she'll look over 'em slow and careful-like about a half a dozen times to get the bugs and worms and sun-spots outten 'em. Lady bugs and sich like are all right in their places, but I shore wouldn't want to eat any of 'em in my greens and know of it.

"After she's washed 'em and looked 'em over, she puts 'em in a big iron pot. Mine you, none of these here new-fangled contraptions. Than she washes a nice piece of sow-belly and draps it in. Some folks allow sow-belly ain't any good to be cooked with wile-greens like hog-jowl. Me, I ain't never seen much difference. I calculate it's jist a matter of opinion.

"Elviry knows exactly when to take up her greens. She never lets 'em cook too long. I've seen women folks cook greens ontill they were slick. Rather than to eat 'em, I'd druther take a big dose of sulphur and molasses and Epsom salts.

"When the greens are finally done, Elviry allus calls you to wash your hands and face and draw your chair up to the table. Than you whack yourself off a piece of hot corn pone and put two or three dabs of yellor butter on the bread and wait a little bit for it to melt and soak in. After that, boy, you're ready to tie into it and get wile-greens and corn pone up to your elbows!

"I've heerd tell about these here feasts of the old Roman Emperors

and Grecian heroes, but they never sot down to a mess of vittles like black-eyed peas, wile-greens, hog meat, sorghum molasses, yellor butter, buttermilk, and corn pone like Elviry can sot before you. Naw, Sir! They pint blink didn't!"

BESIDES the raising of enough corn to supply corn pone for the table, and for the hogs and cattle, Ike considers it absolutely essential that enough be planted to insure a supply of "cawn-likker," or "white lightnin'" for the current season. "If'n I ever had airey youngin that couldn't drink a full pint of cawn likker without battin' an eye, or chaw a twist of long-green terbacker every day, I gannies, I'd shore disown 'im," Ike was once heard to declare. "He wouldn't be a Snoddy. No siree, not by a danged sight."

One day two Revenue Agents came to Ike's neighborhood. They were riding fine horses and gave out they were timber buyers. On Rough Creek, they came upon eleven-year-old Bige, one of Ike's numerous brood of youngins, seated on a log, fishing with pole and line.

The officers stopped their mounts. "Hello, youngster! Live around here?"

Bige turned his head. He gave the horsemen a long searching look.

"Yep," he drawled.

"How's fishing?" asked the officers.

"Could be better!"

Bige sized up the two men. He spat out a stream of tobacco juice.

"Where you fellers from?"

Both men laughed shortly. "Why, we are — are — are just riding around," one of them said with a friendly grin.

Bige turned and looked at the officers, one eye squinched, a sarcastic grin on his face.

"Huh! Revenooers!" Like his sire, Bige went straight to the point.

The men looked at each other and laughed.

"What is your name, lad, and how old are you?"

Bige looked at the mounted men for a moment.

"Wal, now, I don't see if'n it's any of your danged-fire business what my handle is, but I don't mind a-tellin' you. It's Bige. Bige Snoddy!"

"Ike Snoddy's boy?" asked one of the men interestedly, as he leaned over his saddle horn.

Bige grinned like a 'possum again.

"That's what Ma tells Pap," he chuckled.

The officers looked surprised.

"Is Mr. Snoddy home now?"

"Yep, kinda guess he is. He's probably a-layin' in the door right now a-drawin' a fine sight on you fellers if'n you starts towards our place! That's it right there!" Bige pointed up the hillside to a log house partly concealed by timber and underbrush.

The officers looked startled for a

moment, but soon recovered their composure.

"Do you know of any moonshine stills around here?"

"Shore," Bige spoke at once. "I can p'int you out three or four!"

The men looked interested. The red-haired one reached in his pocket; his hand came out containing a coin.

"I'll give you this half a dollar, boy, if you'll point out where a still is located."

Bige arose from his seat. He drew his line and wound it around the fishing pole.

"Gimme the half dollar!"

"Not so fast, youngster! Not so fast!" The revenue man drew back his hand. "I'll give you the half a dollar, and a half a dollar for each still you point out, but only after we get back!"

Bige grinned a real grin which spread all over his freckled face.

"Pap, he allus said revenooers ain't bright! He'll give me the half dollar attar he gets back! If'n I shows 'im airey moonshine still, they ain't a-comin' back!"

He finished with his fishing line and prepared to take his departure.

"Aren't you going to try and earn some money?" asked one of the officers, holding up the coin.

"Not today," drawled Bige, "And have Pap whale hell outa me for makin' 'im use a puffectly good cartridge a-knockin' you outa the saddle! So long!" Bige started up the path towards the house. Half-way up he turned, put his thumb to his nose and twiddled his fingers in a gesture of insolence and defiance.

That is the Snoddy way. For Ike and all his breed are mighty tough — as tough as the white oak knots that grow on the ridge where he lives.

The Old-Fashioned Backbone

We done invented ourselves so many alphabets and rules and recipes that we can't see anything else; if what we see can't be fitted into an alphabet or a rule, we are lost. We have come to be like critters doctor folks might have created in laboratories, that have learned how to slip off their bones and guts and still live, still be kept alive indefinite and forever maybe even without knowing the bones and guts are gone. We have slipped our backbone; we have decided a man don't need a backbone any more; to have one is old-fashioned. But the groove where the backbone used to be is still there, and the backbone has been kept alive, too, and someday we're going to slip back into it. I don't know just when nor just how much of a wrench it will take to teach us, but someday.

WILLIAM FAULKNER, in *THE TALL MEN*, *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*, Random House, 1950



THE WIDENING FLAW

a story — herbert gold

HE had the look of someone on the move. He wore sharp combos of zoot and college and talked of the early Christian martyrs. "Neat!" he would cry, lithely dancing in that adolescent mid-world between girlishness and manhood, both agile and clumsy. "That boy's got the stuff! He's found the beat again! Just wrap yourself around it, man" — and, pausing in his prancing, he would bring his large helpless near-sighted brown eyes closer to confide: "I also get my kicks from Saint Francis of Assisi."

Nineteen years old, a poet, he had already grown weary of the tradi-

tion bent by him to express a notion of the criminal as the most apt personification of "the spirit of our age." The academic phrase was borrowed; the idea of confronting the motivations and vocabulary of bebop with the proud forms and tricks of John Donne had been carried out with such monkeyshines that he achieved the startled concern of several of his professors in addition to quirking their eyebrows. His rhyming of *prostatic-Socratic* or *bastard-mastered* provided no great shakes of difference between him and a dozen other ambitious young men in a city university whose president referred to it as "The Princeton of the Midwest"; but the objectifications of his themes — Black Bottom, marijuana, pickup bands, shoplifting, and cellar parties — gave him the authority of one in

Herbert Gold, a twenty-seven-year-old Cleveland family man, is a part-time instructor at Western Reserve University. His first novel, Birth of a Hero, was published last September by the Viking Press.

the know, a security emerging in his tight shrewd phrases, in his flashes of rhetorical spark, and in the painful itch of unfaked feeling. Nevertheless, approaching his twentieth birthday, he had already tired of what he called in parody "a period of my development." Lighting briefly on William Blake, fluttering about Ramakrishna, swooping down toward the martyrs, only his faith in "the new jazz" remained constant in this search for the true and the good. He himself possessed the beautiful — "Lord forgive me my vanity," he grinned.

A systematic analysis of rhythm in John Donne had been interrupted by his arrest for peddling marijuana. "I'm just an academic grind earning my keep, man," he explained to the Feds. His notes and bibliography were confiscated, then lost by a careless station house cop. A first offender, his adroit contrition and his parents' tears earned him probation. A well-known professor of French literature, who had written a biography of François Villon, *The Accursed Poet*, offered to guide him. "But who will guide you, Dr. Winters?" he asked in his teasing way. "Don't frown at me from your oyster eyes, that's no answer."

The Dean of Men had already called him an unstable personality, listing in evidence his bad manners and an addiction to *The Lives of the Saints*. "Beethoven used to spit against mirrors," he argued when

advised to use a handkerchief. His fellow students, distrusting him for writing poetry and being nervous instead of *smooth*, respected him grudgingly for having seen the wide wide world. Some of the veterans had too, but he, still a boy, wore the tired quick look of a child who travels too much; secret places and events lay concealed under his bony features, all awry, and in his disjointed, dancing walk. He grew a thin beard at his lower lip, studied tenor sax, and won an undergraduate poetry contest.

"Congratulations, Ronnie!"

His long-lidded eyes blinked slyly behind Screen Writer Bop spectacles, and he gave all credit for his achievement to Brother Benny (benzedrine). "I'm the only poet on campus, me, with brains enough to sniff," he said. "Everyone's out of breath from reading Walt Whitman. I've been to New York, too." He did not mention Saint Francis, whose inspiration supplemented Saint Benny's; he was essentially modest.

RONNIE — that was his name — dressed in clothes that might have been those of some larger, fleshier brother, but he was an only son. His father, in addition to selling band-aids wholesale on a three-state route, wrote letters to the editor of the local newspaper. Often printed during the lulls of protest against the abuses of the municipal

street railway system, they concerned such abstractions as Time, Death, Spring, Farm Boys, and so forth. His mother talked and wrote (mostly to her sister in Columbus) of varicose veins and the marvels of osteopathy. Sometimes for his lunch the poet would receive a pair of hot hard-boiled eggs, dry and crumbling within, a warm fat dust without mayonnaise; his mother had lost her taste for cooking. At home in Elyria he slept in his father's room in their half of a two-story house whose walls also served the adjoining houses.

THE WELL-KNOWN PROFESSOR of French literature encouraged Ronnie to write poetry while disparaging his way of life. "Emotion recollected in tranquillity," he reminded him with the smile which appeared regularly on book jackets once every two years, winking to indicate that he made use of Wordsworth's remark without necessarily committing himself to the pantheistic hyperboles of nineteenth century nature poetry. "Gare au chien rhetoric! The Dionysiac element," he counseled him in English over a meal served by Negro students in the faculty dining room — needy white students earned their meals by serving other students, but the Negroes, considered better waiters and certainly more striking figures in their white jackets, were reserved to the faculty — "the Dionysiac can exist in the mind and in the

questing imagination, but at the helm, yes, sitting on your desk like a paper weight . . ."

"I don't have a desk, Dr. Winters."

". . . if you would make poetry appropriate to our epoch, at the helm must remain an Apollonian contemplation of the destructive passions we all see about us." He leaned across the white-napped table, reaching a radish and with the same gesture drawing closer to this favored student, whom he tapped familiarly on the arm. "And the passion within you," he pronounced crisply through the refrigerated vegetable. "And the passion within."

Ronnie, in his best Richman Bros.' covert for this occasion of dinner, his face glistening with soap, his hair slicked down over his lean skull and the part clean and straight, his eyelids slightly reddened from last night's hash, his gaze nevertheless clear and unblinking with excitement, his pink hand leaning part way across the table, said to his good friend, the well-known professor of French literature: "Pee."

The professor loved him for this. "Suppose," Ronnie said, "just suppose Blake looked at a clapped-up alley cat and then thought, *Tiger tiger burning bright*. That wasn't just something called imagination. That was letting that alley cat grab hold of him. That was letting the tiger in that alley cat jump all

over him. Man, O man, didn't you ever have a nightmare? That's inspiration, what I mean. Those yellow eyes in a dream, you call that imagination? No! Imagination doesn't let you sweat cold like that. Imagination doesn't let you scream awake. Listen, that alley cat *is* a tiger. . . . The role of the poet, then, was in its deepest sense a passive one, a seeking to be seized by the primary forces of the world and carried by them; as Rimbaud and Hart Crane believed, the poet's violence consists in his willingness to be buffeted by the subtle breezes of his tradition, at the same moment grappling to express the deepest in his own nature and in the nature of the world, which is his cocoon.

"That's what I understand by the Dionysiac," Ronnie concluded.

The well-known professor of French literature was ravished. "Significant," he murmured. "In tranquillity," he protested. The boy not only showed passion, but one felt intellect as well. He leaned across the table to take his hand and squeeze it with understanding and sympathy. "Of course I don't agree with you," he confided, "but I see your point of view. Verlaine too, one might almost say. Naturally."

"Naturally," Ronnie smiled.

"But we have to define the Dionysiac as I understand you to use it," the professor went on, recovering. "Your interpretation is at variance with the customary one."

"Naturally," Ronnie repeated, already weary of the discussion. Your after-shave smells like gardenias, he thought to himself tactfully, his lips barely making the syllables.

"I seem to feel your distinction, that I'll admit," Dr. Winters said, "but it would help us both if you could begin by formulating it. Take Nietzsche's description as your *point de depart*, of course."

"Of course," Ronnie echoed impishly, looking fourteen years old to the well-known professor of French literature.

THEY HAD MANY GOOD TALKS, during conference hours, afterwards for coffee, and once even at the professor's apartment. The professor, no pedant, collected modern slang and appreciated the underground flowerings of a great city. Ronnie became the source of metaphors with which he sometimes flabbergasted his colleagues in the scholarly journals. Ambitious to write a story some day, he kept notes of the sayings of Ronnie, the gestures of Ronnie, the habits of Ronnie. He asked for definitions of such words as "square" and "goof-ball" and "mark," as they were used in Ronnie's world. He asked him to make a list of the synonyms for "cop" and heard with indignation of how two Feds had held one of Ronnie's friends by his heels out of a ninth floor window until he

told where his "gunja" (hemp) was hidden. He kept an argot notebook, alphabetized with detachable tabs. His face darkened with sympathetic anger at tales of stool pigeons; he demanded technical expositions of the new "intellectual" jazz, making cultural generalizations based on its speed, its intricate structure, and its essential derivation from older melodies. . .

But there were other young and promising students, other subjects to explore. The blue argot notebook, from the perspective of a few months and a new transfer student interested in the sources of *Ubu Roi*, seemed too special to be of practical interest.

Ronnie, besides, had become a burden. The money he borrowed and never returned was a comparatively minor point; the chief difficulty lay in his assumption of a claim, giving the professor a responsibility he was not ready to accept, since, for example, he had no scruples about interrupting working hours to read him a new poem. Granted, the youth had talent of a sort, some pure pulse within his disordered existence, but he took the professor's first sympathetic reaction as drawn from the same critical level as his reasoned judgments of the literary masters of this century and the last. Ronnie, in short, could be a bother. The professor was a busy man. Dr. Winters asked himself in the mirror — as he inserted

a patented aluminum tube designed to trim the hair from his nose, clip-and-snip — if he were not sometimes too kind to others, thereby sacrificing his own gifts.

Indeed, his barbered nostrils stared back at him.

THE BOY seemed to understand. He had not made an effort to see him in almost a week; but Ronnie had only been waiting to offer some recompense for the attentions Dr. Winters had given him. One day, then, without knocking, he burst into his study in the midst of a thorny paragraph of a new work which he secretly intended to be a revolutionary literary-socio-psychological analysis, a contribution which he planned to entitle, "Gossip: Palliative to Loneliness in Literature and Modern Life." Heedless, Ronnie had come in, his eyes gleaming, but insensitive to the professor's annoyed crumbling of a gum eraser against his blotter.

"I've got something for you!" he cried. "An invite!" It seemed that, through a friend on the traps, he had arranged admission to a pick-up band session at three o'clock Monday morning after the regular Sunday night dance stints. It was to take place in the back room of a private club in Black Bottom, something very special, secret, predicted to be an historic occasion, an honor and a tribute to be permitted to attend — in fact, "real wonderful."

Ronnie had labored for approval of his "square" friend, the professor; it was especially a risk of esteem because Ronnie, himself a college student although certainly not a "square," had to demonstrate his own grooviness. Grateful for the professor's friendship, he could make this sacrifice for him. And this would be the real thing, a rapt listening among folk who understood each ecstatic chord and trill.

"Three o'clock in the morning?" the professor asked, incredulous.

"Yeah, they all have jobs. But it's the best time — they just begin to get hot —"

"On Cedar Avenue?"

"This is the real thing, man. They don't jump like this every week. All our chatter was nothing — listen, now you can see for yourself, and the real thing —"

"No," the professor said stubbornly.

A silence occurred, like the first astonished pause when a ship slips away from the dock. "What?"

The professor repeated, "No, no, I can't do that."

"What?" — incredulous.

The professor slid his smile into high urbanity, slow speed, and swung around in his chair toward the student.

"You can't, you know," he began, "you can't teach an old pigeon to fly to a new home. I'm too old a pigeon." By this he meant, still smiling his sad wise smile, that there

were some experiences to be excluded from his life in the interest of discipline, and that this would have to be one of them. It could be a good lesson for the boy. Let him profit from it! "My sleep would be annihilated, *mon vieux*, to pass a night like that. My digestion would be ruined. My work for days afterwards would be compromised."

Ronnie looked at him, head cocked.

"And besides, my boy" — this was a bit of kindness — "hearing you talk about those savages is one thing, but trying *myself* to share those African noises and poor lost lives is another. I'm sorry if I disappoint you, but I'm always frank. You know that about me."

"I thought you wanted it," Ronnie said.

"I hope you will forgive me if this spoils your plan," the professor said. "I appreciate your thinking of me, really I appreciate it."

"I'm sorry I disturbed you," Ronnie said at last, backing out.

The distinguished professor of French literature again made his controlled but engaging smile, wise, mature, his lips faintly parted with understanding. "Oh, that's all right," he called out rather more loudly than was his custom, swinging back to the notes laid out on 5 x 7 cards on his desk. "Drop by at any time. You know I'm always happy to talk things over with you, Ronnie. Any time at all."

He shook his head mournfully, as if some judge were studying him, after Ronnie had silently shut the door. He listened for a moment to the tasteless *brouhaha* (a French word) in the hall outside and waited for his imaginary arbiter to nod in approval of the tuck of his cheeks and the tilt of his conscience. Then he returned to his notes.

ONCE Ronnie gave a party. It was the first time in months that he talked with his friend the professor, who accepted his invitation by telephone but then wrote a polite note of regret; something had come up. The celebration took place at the top of a condemned tenement on the edge of the Flats where Ronnie lived — an apartment without electricity or water and almost without furniture. It faced on a court used by the occupants of the building as a garbage pit. From this court, deep enough to swim in, the smell of decay arose to the windows. It was March already, but Ronnie still heated the place by keeping kettles boiling on the gas range; the wallpaper hung in strips, peeled off by a winter of steam clouding from the stove. In some places he had tried to honor the celebration by pinning back the slithers of paper with thumbtacks.

The guests leaned morosely, some sucking their teeth, others lighting or crushing cigarettes, politely striving to make the meager stock of

liquor endure, waiting to be amused, disappointed because it was liquor instead of hemp. Ronnie had expected his friends to increase his stock. Only one had brought a gallon of yellow New York State sauterne which no one wanted to drink.

"Oh-h," sighed Joe Fleisher. "I could have died —"

No one looked up. Ronnie squatted cross-legged in the middle of this group, smiling from one to the other, hoping that they would smile back. He took off his glasses, put them on; he had hoped to surprise himself some time in the act of seeing perfectly. It was not this time.

A girl named Sally languorously leaned on a pile of cushions purchased at a police auction. "Which one was the writer, Sacco or Vanzetti?" she asked. No one answered. "Does anyone here speak French?" she demanded suddenly.

"I do," Peter Granning said.

"Say something."

"Why?"

"Say something, that's all."

"What should I say? Why?"

"Nothing's happening," she complained, "that's why."

She leaned back, her hair violet against the temples from a cheap black dye, stroking a map which had been tacked to the wall, a Decatur projection of the world.

"Nothing's happened," she said again.

A hiss and a splash answered her.

His smile approving the co-ordination of impulse, aim, and ambiguous intention, Ronnie had crushed a glass of New York State sauterne against the map just over her head. Wine and broken glass trickled over her hair and shoulders. She giggled. "You almost hit me," she said.

Still squatting, he let her know how much she meant to him. "I feel a responsibility to my guests," he announced. "If anyone is bored, all he has to do is mention it, please." They all studied the blotch on the map, under which Sally continued to sit while wine dripped and broken glass spangled her hair. "I hit Rhodesia," Ronnie remarked. "How do you like that?"

"I love it," the girl said.

Now he regarded her contemptuously. "I once saw my mother wash her breasts, she made them flop," he said. "Let's see you do that." She didn't, nor did she make a move to, nor had he seen his mother. He invented his dreams, waking or sleeping, all in an instant, truer for that. No one wanted to admit thinking that Ronnie had gone too far. He could have hit her. "Do it the way I told you, kid. For my sake."

He smiled and smiled, his face bloodless and staring as a fish but terrible in outrage against itself. "Get naked, kid," he said. "Come on, sis. For your sake, Sally."

She giggled but did not.

"I know French," he said. "*Moi,*

ie suis un conspirateur obstine. Sashay in our alley, Sally. It's square to be bored."

And she combed the wine onto the couch.

WHEN RONNIE, a fellow literary craftsman, approached some of the older students on campus, they dealt with him as a child. Some argued their fondness for him, but admitted that his raptures augured ill for the development of a critical intelligence. His philosophy of crime became a joke. This business about reconciling St. Francis and Petronius was too romantic; it was a bit of stage. Analysis could help him, both literary and psycho; no one really believed in his jazz and criminal friends. "He *wants* to be a marginal man," a sociology student claimed, plump with his statistics, pinched by insight. The hint of ambition in such a matter made them shake their heads *no* to him while the pencils in their breast pockets clicked softly together.

The true yearning of his life was to laugh, really laugh, hawing and slapping the air with pleasure. He thought it made a nice effect. After his friends left, the evening of his party, he did not exactly cry. He hiccuped. He swallowed and felt that sharp ache at the back of the throat. *Please, everybody.* He could think of no words to point to his loneliness. He was only alone again. He went to the mirror and tried to

believe that he was weeping; he doubted himself, but in fact he was.

One Saturday afternoon a black sedan pulled up to a machine shop near the lake docks. Three men, in overcoats, hats, and mufflers despite the warm May afternoon, jumped out of the back seat in a synchronized maneuver, not even glancing at each other. One man, the driver, remained behind the wheel while the others hurried into the store. He kept the motor running during their absence; once it coughed and stalled, but he ground the starter and the motor purred with the clutch out. He smoked quietly and sniffed the Spring air coming up from the lake. When the three men ran toward him, carrying shopping bags full of payroll cash, he eased the automobile away from the curb. They jumped in, and the automobile roared off as an alarm sounded.

Then an odd confusion occurred. Although Ronnie had been given a route to follow and to rehearse many times, he had practiced it always without a police siren screaming behind him. He made a wrong turn. He must have been thinking of something else. He turned up a street with a dead end.

THE THREE MEN were given terms of seven years each. Ronnie was put in a hospital, although no one noticed any essential alteration in him. "I beat the rap. It's not bad in here," he said to his visitors. He

grinned (failure of affectivity), but said he was sorry (evidence of misplaced affectivity). "They must think I'm a real square. I don't know what they'll do to me when they get out."

He wanted to apologize to his three friends, but the letter never reached them, and anyway it was filled with phrases they would not understand. *If you friends think I'm scared, you're wrong I'm not, I did the best we all do the best I did the best I could for all of us, but you're right I am.*

The doctors allowed him paints and paper. Everyone admires his water colors, which show genuine feeling and, as one doctor noted in his report, "a good possibility of contact." Art criticism was a hobby of this psychiatrist. "Look at me, I'm criminally insane," Ronnie said cheerfully. "A little anyway." Dr. Winters expressed disappointment that he had given up poetry for painting.

"I'm still on the move, Professor," Ronnie told him, grinning with his childish naughtiness. "You can call it a stage. They house-broke me not to jitter, and they sweet-tongued me here, but I'm still moving. You want to know where?"

"Where? Please say what you mean," the professor asked.

Ronnie looked more boyish than ever. They must have fed him well; his color was good. "Away," he said. "Away. Away."

GENIUS



WITH A MALLET

The story of Beniamino Bufano

NO MORE ECCENTRIC could fly from San Francisco to Italy for a six-months stay with \$20,000 in his wallet and his wardrobe in a five-cent shopping bag. This is an exploit of genius, and Beniamino Bufano may well be the outstanding genius of his time.

It is possible that there are sculptors whose technical gifts equal his, but the world's critics generally agree that none matches his exalted spirit. As fiscally improvident as he is culturally rich, Benny has known the warm fellowship and cold slumgullion of jail; he has been the house guest of two of history's titans; he has dwelt with royalty and dined with cannibals, and he has worked as

a coolie on the Canton docks for a daily bowl of rice.

Five feet two and weighing 112 pounds, his seamy lineaments give him the appearance of a superannuated jockey. Yet he handles huge statues as if they were ash trays and once, singlehanded, routed six goons who attempted to sabotage his municipally sponsored one-man show in San Francisco's Mall.

His latest contribution to the Bufano legend is a heroic mosaic which fills one wall of a San Francisco café. Benny remains magnificently unscathed by the blasphemy of diverting such anointed talents to the titillation of the gastric juices — for a very good reason. Not one cent did he pocket for the mosaic's creation.

Bufano has created some of the art world's most strenuous controversies, as well as some of its most distinguished statuary. Until he

Dugal O'Liam, who lives in Mountain View, California, when he does not roam around, is a free-lance writer and has previously contributed to THE MERCURY.

met D. W. Moar, a bustling West Coast restaurateur, however, he had never attempted a mosaic, a comparatively obsolescent art form. Occasionally a harried architect, needing a durable privy for a swank night club, or a picture wall for a bank, would install a synthetic mosaic, but these were little more than tile jobs and as transitory as the institutions they adorned.

For years he had pondered a mosaic as a fillip to an iconoclastic life, so it was not too surprising that when Moar dreamed up his gilded beanery, Benny's talents should fit into his plans like Scotch into soda. Ted Wetteland, an industrial designer with a remarkable facial resemblance to Madame George Eliot, got them together, but when Moar broached an idea for a series of photo murals by Beniamino Bufano, he almost had to summon the law to separate them. After Wetteland had seen Benny safely through this crisis, Moar decided to listen.

Why not, Benny asked, do something with a functional as well as artistic value? Something capable of resisting the gooey fingers of Moar's more curious pastry customers, and at the same time improving their minds, if any? To be specific, something like a mosaic. Mildly intrigued, Moar astutely asked for a cost estimate.

"Cost?" squealed Benny. "This, sir, is to be a monument to peace."

Somewhat less starry-eyed, Moar

asked Wetteland to submit some figures. A week later he was told that to send Bufano to Italy for the terra cotta tessera of which mosaics are fabricated would cost \$20,000.

"Twenty thousand?" It was Moar's turn to squeal. "Do you mean to tell me the head at the Bal [a plush San Francisco night spot] cost twenty grand? And I'm not even getting any plumbing!"

Gently Ted warped him out of the fog and Moar agreed that anyone who could spend \$20,000 and not even realize money was involved could be depended upon to give him something spectacular for his money, even if only a colossal suit in bankruptcy. One month later, Benny started for Rome with the twenty thousand.

BENIAMINO BUFANO was born in San Fele, Italy, in 1898, the last of sixteen children of Conia Bufano, the local advocate and a vociferous supporter of Liberator Guiseppe Garibaldi. From his mother he inherited his spiritual and artistic qualities, and from his father a belligerence which was destined to involve him in beefs with almost everybody he encountered, including Westbrook Pegler.

His feuds have a consecrated quality, in that they never involve monetary gain, only principle. The Pegler hassle, for example, arose over a statue of St. Francis, whom Benny reveres with a consummate

hagiolatry. It had been done for the 1938 Golden Gate International Exposition strictly in the Bufano precept, i.e. the ultimate frugality of folds and linear interruptions. "A tombstone cutter's nightmare," trumpeted the saturnine essayist, in announcing that he could do a better St. Francis.

Benny's friends wagered \$200 he couldn't, and Benny sent along a sculptor's kit. After a brief joust with a hod of effete Connecticut clay, Pegler capitulated, claiming he had short-circuited his sacroiliac in a softball game with Lowell Thomas and could not lift the materials.

Happily, the Pegler opinion of St. Francis is not universal. Roger Fry, Britain's very articulate critic, called it "the most significant sculpture in five hundred years," and the late Heywood Broun, with a reproachful turn of his leftish pen, predicted that "in time we may learn to appreciate the brave beauty of Bufano's St. Francis."

Benny was six when his father's rash Garibaldine harangues forced the family to flee Italy for New York. There he was soon hustling newspapers in the shadow of Brooklyn Bridge and running errands for the Art Students League. When the League's Herbert Adams offered to teach him sculpturing, Benny's mother gave him a piece of advice which has motivated much of his work since.

"Never sculpture people," she

said, "Only animals. They are more beautiful because they are more pure of heart."

The effect of this gentle counsel is manifest in every Bufano show, where you will surely find *A Bird*, *A Seal*, *Two Bears*, *Sleeping Doves*, and, alas, *Gulls*. At the municipal exhibition in San Francisco's Mall, relatives of this latter group rewarded him for honoring their kin by maintaining an almost constant tactical bombing of major targets. As most of the statues were in black marble, granite, or stainless steel, the effects can well be imagined.

BENNY left the Art Students League, for he considered it saturated with pedantry, and sought a pastoral freedom with a brother living in Pennsylvania. His first shock was the discovery that his brother earned his living as a prize fighter under the name of Kid Buffalo, the second his brother's insistence that Benny earn his keep by acting as a sparring partner.

It was a dubious economy for The Kid. Such muscles had Benny developed wrestling heavy statuary and so high was his dudgeon at the indignity that the slaughter of Kid Buffalo at the hands of his tiny kin was scarcely less sanguinary than that of his professional namesake at the hands of the old plainmen.

Benny astutely fled Pennsylvania for San Francisco, where he had a commission for the 1915 Pan-Pacific

Exposition. While there he learned that Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney had offered \$500 for the best American sculpture on "What Has America Done For Her Immigrants?" Convinced that she had done precious little, he began work on a negative entry. On the base he carved St. John 1:11 — "I came unto my own and they received me not" — submitted it, and ducked. To his astonishment, it won the award. Three years later, Maillol, the French master, was to exclaim, "For America, he is a triumph; she has at last given us a great sculptor."

REJECTED for World War I service because of his small size, he went to China with a newsreel crew and promptly got lost from his party. Alone and hungry, he joined a band of mendicant monks, only to learn that they were vegetarians. At first he felt a gnawing emptiness, but in time his asceticism prevailed and he, too, became a vegetarian.

Eventually his fiddle foot carried him to Canton's art colony, but not for long. Irked by the group's encrusting philolatriy, he took up with the waterfront coolies and for nine months bent his back to the toil of this most degraded of the world's working classes. He existed on the traditional daily bowl of rice, laced, occasionally, with a fish head, and slept on the hard dock planks until one morning when he was approached by a radiant lady.

Mme. Sun Yat-sen, wife of China's liberator and sister of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, had learned he was in Canton and had come to invite him to the palace. One night, while living with the Suns, he saw three hatchetmen stalking Dr. Sun. Alone, he set upon and routed them, but incurred a bullet wound in his hand, which was to bar him from military service in World War II.

The outstanding triumph of the Sun interlude was his twelve-foot, stainless steel statue of Sun Yat-sen, which he presented to San Francisco's Chinese. It was his first venture into a medium he originated and developed, becoming a journeyman welder in the process. Today it stands in Portsmouth Square, San Francisco, as a wry commentary on the public's short memory, since its creator later was to spend many a foggy night on benches within its benign shadow.

From China, Benny went to India as the house guest of that immortal apostle of peace, Mohandas Gandhi. How they reconciled their divergent approaches to a common goal has never been divulged. Benny made no statues of the Mahatma, but did paint him full figure, an opus some captious critics profess to believe is a self-portrait of Benny Bufano in a dhoti.

After India, he spent a month with a tribe of African cannibals and found them fine models and kind hosts. The fact that their die-

tary customs sometimes called for dining on roast rump of crown agent, etc., he considered none of his business. As a vegetarian, he was forced to decline several invitations to dinner, but says the food seemed well served, as meat courses go.

DONE WITH WANDERING, Benny returned to San Francisco to record his travels in marble, granite, and steel. It was at this time that he did the Sun statue. Explaining his refusal to accept pay for it from his Chinese friends, he said whimsically:

"The money would only have been an evil because I'd have spent it for food for Saroyan, and he'd have gotten soft before he found out he was a genius."

During this period, Benny, Saroyan, and Author Dick Hagopian shared an unheated loft in Clay street. Tough-fibered little Benny took a job with the WPA and nightly bought steaming coffee, which the three drank to keep warm. Occasionally he made a pizza (an Italian tomato pie), which he carried ten miles to a kiln the city had provided for firing a series of park statues. After baking the pizza, he would fly back with it to the gawping fledglings in the Clay street eyrie.

"Sometimes," he recalls, wistfully, "they'd complain that the pizza was cold and say they'd as soon eat one of my statues."

In 1935 the city of Portland,

Oregon, asked him to do a memorial to Colonel C. E. S. Wood, beloved West Coast Maecenas. Benny designed a symbol of purity and called it *Childhood*, but Portland's piestistical city fathers insisted that it be given more clothing. Refusing to impeach his lofty intent, Benny reclaimed the statue, and it now stands in Colonel Wood's home town of Los Gatos. As usual, Benny got nothing but kudos.

The sparse attire of *Childhood* was consistent with Benny's own indifference to dress. When he carves the human figure, he exercises the utmost economy in raiment. A division of trousers legs he considers capricious, and, as a result, his statues of the human male are often mistaken for lorelei with boyish bobs.

In 1943, Benny developed a shooting war with the San Francisco Art Commission. To palliate him, Mayor Roger Lapham made him a commission member and then the fat was in the fire. During one session a colleague protested that Benny had called the commissioners a bunch of stupid jackasses.

"I did not; I called you a bunch of sterile jackasses," was Benny's righteous rejoinder, accompanied by his resignation from the commission.

In the late thirties, Virginia Lewin Bufano, whom Benny had wed in 1925, caused his arrest in Marin county for failure to support their son, charging that Benny believed himself a demigod, above the obli-

gations, but not the delights, of biology. Benny met this flippant accusation with a shocked sigh and went off to the Marin pound. There he started a move to have the cells decorated with copies of masterpieces of a retributive motif, viz. the Laocoön group. By the time Benny's friends had hustled bail, Sheriff Walter Sellmer was glad to see him on his way.

During these dismal days, Benny turned out some of his greatest work. In 1945, at the time of his one-man show, he already had statues in permanent niches in London, Rome, Paris, Vienna, Peking, Berlin, and throughout America. No sculptor in history has been more widely exhibited or violently discussed, pro and con.

ONE of Bufano's most ambitious works, a twenty-foot figure of a woman, collects dust in a coast warehouse, a splendid example of the sort of things that are always happening to Benny. It, too, was ordered for the 1938 Fair and rejected as too advanced. Three years later the Japanese Society of California arranged to buy it for a gift to San Francisco, but before the agreed price could be raised, Pearl Harbor intervened. Twenty-four hours before the Japanese were to be sent to resettlement camps, the committeemen approached Benny with \$500, all they had had time to raise. In a fit of impractical patriot-

ism he seized a ten-pound mallet, chased them into the foggy morning, and hurled the \$500 after them.

A Los Angeles merchant then called on him and proposed to buy the statue, rig it with neon tubes, and erect it atop his Wilshire Boulevard bazaar. In the ensuing footrace, Benny was gaining, although again carrying the impost of the mallet, when the quarry astutely bolted into the Hall of Justice. Having a dim view of the type of justice available there for a man caught pursuing another with a mallet, Benny continued on to George Mardikian's famed restaurant. Over white wine and lemon, the sole Bufano tippie, he told Mardikian the story, whereat George asked him what he called his gigantic hex.

"Peace," said Benny.

A year ago, he was approached by a couple, childless through a forty-year marriage, to do a mosaic for a building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Benny submitted a cross section sketch of an egg starkly astir with the processes of incubation. As if this were not enough, he titled it *Fertility*, and then sulked moodily when he heard no more from the potential \$10,000 commission.

Following the Pegler row, Benny presented the San Francisco Press Club with a black marble figure of a sleeping cat. It was christened *Tombstone* and ordained the club

mascot, and the grateful newsmen gave Benny a life membership and free lodgings in perpetuity. He became a distinguished club exhibit, met Ted Wetteland there and a few years later was deep in the Moar mosaic deal.

ON THE DAY of Benny's departure for Italy, Wetteland met him at the airport. The plane was revved up when Benny came trotting down the apron, hatless and wearing a blue serge jacket, hickory shirt, and a pair of whipcord pantaloons General Vinegar Joe Stilwell had given him and which he'd bushelled himself, the better to contain his meager *derrière*. Although regarding this as somewhat informal attire for a world traveler with the greater part of \$20,000 in his pocket, Wetteland refrained from comment, but did ask Benny where his luggage was. Benny held out a jute-handled Manila bag such as householders use to carry home the hebdomadal fodder and said, "Here."

Six months later he telephoned Wetteland from Rome to announce that the tessera had been shipped and he was ready to start home. Naïvely, Ted inquired about money.

"Loaded," Benny replied. "Just borrowed five hundred dollars from the United Press."

Back in San Francisco, still wearing Vinegar Joe's whipcords and carrying the same luggage, Benny mounted the tessera on steel frames,

which were, in turn, set into the Moar café wall. At the unveiling, reactions were typical of all Bufano exhibits. The pro-Bufanoites were awestruck; the antis-, possibly confused by the dissonance of mosaic lines and the numerous one-eyed faces, declared that not since the French Angel had last wrestled there had San Francisco seen such a cure for the hiccups.

The three-episode opus was titled *Birth Of The United Nations*, and, like most Bufano creations, defies the printed word. Only those who view it with a catholic appreciation will capture its mystic power. Whether or not an abundance of such intellects will be found in the daily crush of the world's most costly self-service restaurant is D. W. Moar's headache.

A rough accounting revealed that Benny had spent \$40,000 on the mosaic, out of which he salvaged nothing for himself. Despairing of ever channeling any money into the Bufano pockets, Moar gave him a gold meal ticket good for anything he wants to eat in any of the Moar outlets for as long as he lives.

For a vegetarian who fasts completely one day of each week, this may sound like a minor windfall, but Benny is sublimely happy with it. Combined with the Press Club's largess and his own cultural achievements, it makes him — in his own mind, at any rate — the richest man in the world.

Hitler or Stalin

WHICH WAS THE WORST?

A Comparison in Concentration Camps

MARGARET BUBER-NEUMANN

I DIVIDED SEVEN YEARS of my life between the slave camps of Soviet Russia and those of Nazi Germany, and people often ask me: What are the differences? Which was the worst? Which would you choose if you had to start all over again?

In the attempt to answer, my mind goes back to the time I was delivered at the Nazi camp for women at Ravensbrueck.

It was a sunny day in August

Margaret Buber-Neumann spent, altogether, seven years in Soviet and Nazi concentration camps. Wife of the prominent German Communist, she fled to the Soviet Union in 1933, where her husband was arrested and disappeared. Imprisoned by the NKVD for two years, she was turned over to the Gestapo in 1940 and liberated in 1945. Her story is told in a widely known book, Under Two Dictators, published in America in 1951.

1940, and I was astonished at the scene before me: neat plots of grass, gay flower beds, freshly raked gravel paths. To the left of the gate was a great aviary with peacocks proudly displaying their plumage. The place seemed more like a pleasure resort than a prison camp. At least it seemed so to me, for I had just come from the Soviet slave camp at Karaganda in Siberia. Its images and smells were still close and vivid.

At Karaganda there had been no road at all, only casual tracks, and when it rained, these tracks were churned into quagmires by trucks and ox-carts. And what filthy quagmires! I do not believe any Westerner can imagine the filth of a Soviet concentration camp. There is nothing in our world to compare it to. At Burma, my first camp, I was appalled by the heaps of rotting

garbage and debris and human excrement surrounding the kitchen where we went for our food. And yet Burma was a model of cleanliness compared to the "punishment compound" where I spent practically the whole of my imprisonment. (I was "punished" for applying to the authorities for a reconsideration of my case!) Here neither prisoners nor guards made even a pretense of ordinary decency. Latrine pits had been dug, but no one bothered to use them. When I arrived they were unapproachable anyway, for they were surrounded by piles of human manure. The stench that pervaded the whole camp was terrible beyond belief.

The contrast at Ravensbrueck was yet more noticeable in the washroom. The first thing that happens to a prisoner when he comes into any concentration camp is delousing and washing. You might think this would be welcome, especially if you had not taken off your clothes, or even washed your face, for months. In one respect, the washroom in both camps was a horror. It was an invasion of that last tiny island of selfhood you had left, the privateness of your own body. But in the Soviet camps this miserable proceeding was attended by neither cleanliness nor a semblance of propriety. The male prisoners who doled out our half pail of warm water in the soggy-floored wash room thought it a great joke to go

around slapping our naked behinds. When we got back our ragged clothes, they would be shrunk to approximately two-thirds their size by the delouser, which did not, however, make them cleaner.

At Ravensbrueck there were separate showers, hot water and soap, women attendants in white uniforms. And when we came out, we were handed new clothes — coarse enough, but clean and our own.

ANOTHER CONTRAST was the quarters. At Ravensbrueck the "huts" had each a large toilet room, a washroom, tables, stools, lockers for our clothes! We were each given two woolen blankets, a clean sheet and pillow case, a monthly allotment of soap, and sixty carefully cut squares from a newspaper — our "toilet tissue" for the month. Since Ravensbrueck was a women's camp, we were also given six "napkins" and required to keep them scrupulously clean. In Russia this particular phase of a woman's life is ignored as though it did not exist.

At Karaganda I had slept on bare boards or a dirt floor. As covering, I had only the clothes I worked in, as a pillow a sack stuffed with the few bits of apparel I had managed to keep from the quick hands of camp thieves. And there was not a moment's rest from the vermin: bedbugs dropping like rain from the low ceilings of our clay huts; lice that nestled to our bodies in colo-

nies; fleas larger and greedier than I had ever seen. And rats! I lay awake many nights as they skipped madly over me in frantic search of the tiny bag of dried crumbs I had saved for my own hungriest moment.

At Ravensbrueck vermin were not considered normal to life, even for prisoners, and the necessary precautions were taken against them.

THEN THERE WAS THE FOOD. When we new prisoners at Ravensbrueck were first called to lunch, and ladled out sausage, white bread, margarine, bacon fat, cream of wheat with stewed fruit, I turned in astonishment to the woman next in line: "Do you always get so much to eat?" She was surprised at my surprise; she thought we weren't getting enough. How could she know, how can anyone who has not experienced it know, that in Soviet camps the near-starvation of the prisoners is a refined science. The size of the chunk of dry dark bread handed us at dawn as we set off for the fields was determined by the amount, not the hours, of work we had done the day before—the square metres of field hacked, or the number of bags shouldered. Thus we all had one constant thought—bread. Yet no matter how we strained our nerves and muscles fourteen to sixteen hours a day, we rarely achieved the full "quota" with its bread ration of twenty-five ounces. For my part I

never got above the last kitchen, which meant fourteen ounces of bread a day, a cup of sour soup at noon, a scrap of salt fish at night. This quota system was a Soviet invention for getting the last molecule of work out of the prisoners, and for some reason was not adopted by the Nazis.

At Ravensbrueck we all received the same three meals a day regardless of the amount or product of our work. There was always ample bread, besides meat, fats, cereal, dried fruits. It was not abundant, but it was adequate to keep away those pangs of hunger so deliberately exploited by the Soviet system.

Furthermore, at Ravensbrueck we never worked as long or as hard as in Siberia. When I arrived in 1940 the workday was eight hours, six days a week. We were free on Sundays. In Siberia prisoners in general were supposed to be off Sundays, but there was always "voluntary" work to be done for an extra fistful of bread, and being famished they always "volunteered." We prisoners in the "punishment compound" never had a chance to be off Sundays or holidays.

That was one big difference between the two camps. But it was characteristic of the Nazi camps to convert the regime of orderliness and cleanliness itself into a torture. As a recent slave of Stalin, it seemed to me the last touch of luxury to

have a clean straw mattress for my bunk, but under the Nazis this refinement became a daily misery. To distribute the straw in that mattress so as to please a hierarchy of relentless supervisors who pretended to know the exact position of every straw was a task for which I was unprepared either as wife and mother in Germany, or as prisoner in Siberia. Yet failure in this fantastic task of "bed-building" was punished by having to stand with aching joints "at attention" all evening long while your friends had their supper and were allowed to stroll about the barracks.

Another pretext for torture was the adjustment of the head kerchief in such a way as to leave exactly the prescribed number of millimeters of smoothly brushed hair showing. The penalty for failure here, unavoidable in those with naturally curly hair, was anything from a slap across the face to a shaved head and a term in the punishment block.

A more distinguishing feature of the Nazi torture was systematic flogging. Following Himmler's visit in 1940 it became a common event at Ravensbrueck to punish a prisoner with twenty-five lashes for the slightest offense against the regulations. For some reason, though Soviet inquisitors will club a prisoner almost to death while extracting a "confession," the guards in Soviet prison camps are rather tem-

perate. At least they are casual. Those who are ugly or quick-tempered might beat up a prisoner any time. But with the Nazis flogging was streamlined. Specially talented sadists were employed to do it, and the whole performance was conducted with typical German thoroughness.

THIS "GERMAN THOROUGHNESS" had a happy side too — in the handling of letters and packages. In Soviet camps prisoners in certain categories were supposed to have the right to send and receive letters and parcels. But what with the poor transportation facilities, bureaucratic inefficiency, universal thievery and indifference, few communications ever arrived. When I was in Russia, there was no possibility, of course, that letters to a foreign country would be delivered, so my mother and sisters in Germany had to think of me as dead for years before I could at last inform them I was a prisoner in our own country. During the five years I was in Ravensbrueck I communicated once a month with my family. My mother could have the comfort of making me little cakes filled with as much ground nuts and fruit and sugar and butter as she could pack into them. Certain categories of prisoners, I must add, were not allowed to communicate with their relatives. When arrested, they disappeared into "Nacht und Nebel" (darkness and

fog), as did the majority of the political prisoners in Soviet camps.

GERMAN THOROUGHNESS also worked for us in the matter of "free time." In Siberia we could do no more after the day's work than stagger exhausted to our huts. In Ravensbrueck we had strength left in the evenings, as well as on Sundays, to walk back and forth on the gravel paths, talking together, exchanging opinions and hopes. There was naturally a good deal of dissension — after all, it was a camp for women! As an ex-Communist I was particularly hounded by the animosity of those prisoners who still retained their fanatical belief in the "Socialist fatherland." They shunned me as a pariah. Nevertheless, I found friends with whom I could freely discuss my political views as well as the joys and sorrows of our daily life. In Soviet camps such friendship was all but impossible. The moment you let slip some remark about your real feelings, you were seized by the fearful thought: Suppose he's a spy, suppose he tells on me! And nine times out of ten he would at least be a person trying to "get in" with the authorities — your gesture of friendship would mean removal to a punishment camp. This constant fear of informers, a daylong nightmare, did not exist in the Nazi camps. Though the prisoners might quarrel and fight among themselves, they

maintained on the whole a firm solidarity against their guards and oppressors.

A less agreeable result of German thoroughness was this: if a Nazi court sentenced a prisoner to a certain term, the prisoner would be released punctually on the day and hour when the term expired. For this reason, the Nazis did not as a general rule sentence political prisoners to any definite term at all. They were simply thrown into the concentration camps and left there without any hope except for the defeat and overthrow of the Nazi regime. In Soviet Russia, on the contrary, prisoners were always sentenced for a definite term. For political prisoners there was very slight prospect of release when the term expired. Some excuse would usually be found for renewing or extending it, if only that the "papers" had not yet "come through." Still we could and did cherish, and almost live on, the hope that ultimately something of a more or less juridical nature might happen.

As the Nazis began to lose their cocksureness of victory, conditions at Ravensbrueck deteriorated seriously. With 36,000 instead of the 7,000 prisoners for whom the camp had been built, cleanliness pretty much disappeared. We worked longer hours, had less food. The vermin moved in. By the end of 1944 things were declining to a Siberian level, and there was not a great deal

of difference left between Ravensbrueck and Karaganda.

IT WOULD BE HARD, I think, for a prisoner to choose between the refined, law-abiding sadism of the Nazi persecutors and the blundering, often stupid brutality of the ruffians who stood over us with guns in Siberia. There was one cruel and bitter feature of the Soviet camps, however, which had no parallel in the Nazi and no place in the Nazi mores or ideology. That was the ever-present, dread tyranny of the criminals. As a result of the peculiar distortion of Marxian ideas which holds sway in the Soviet Union, these delinquent or depraved characters, who have been committed for rape, theft, robbery, murder, etc., constitute a privileged class in the prison camps. Since they are hand-in-glove with the guards, many of whom are themselves former criminal prisoners, they rob, attack, and torment the "politicals" with no fear of punishment. This aristocracy without noblesse oblige — indeed with the very opposite idea of their role — continue in camp to practice the arts that brought them there. They are particularly expert at thieving. Your few pitiful belongings are not safe even when you sleep on them. I was once nearly kicked to a pulp by a woman criminal simply because she was bored with her own field work. I felt somehow I must retaliate. But

I was warned by the guards to ignore the whole incident if I hoped to survive. There is no opposing the vicious and often insane whims of this aristocracy of convicted criminals — which is certainly without precedent in history.

The Nazi camps also held a horror unparalleled in the history of civilization: the sportive vivisection of human beings. Prisoners were mutilated and maimed in the pretended interest of science, but in ways that had no relation to any genuine problem. It was a case of grown men *playing laboratory* with living men and women as their victims — a perversion of the highest scientific culture that is not to be found in the Russian camps.

One of these "experiments" at Ravensbrueck involved the transfer of bones and muscles in Polish girls, picked out for their physical perfection. Those strong young athletic girls came out of the "laboratory" on crutches — many of them without calf muscles, many able to walk only on their toes. Their one consolation was that now they would surely be saved from execution. This hope, of course, proved false; they were not excluded from the executions and death chambers. Another merciless deed was the forcible aborting of women who came into the camp pregnant by "non-Germans." Though the pregnancy might be in the seventh or eighth month, no exception was

made. Often during these operations the momentary cry of a newborn child could be heard.

These particular examples will perhaps seem mild to those who know of certain experiments on men in more notorious Nazi camps. To us at Ravensbrueck, they were convincing enough of the depravity of our masters.

THERE WAS, of course, one thing even worse — the gas chambers. To the outside world this invention of the Nazis is associated primarily with Hitler's anti-Semitic lunacy. Actually, the first to go, from Ravensbrueck at least, were the sick and the afflicted — those who had some "physical or mental defect," or were incapable of work. Any deformity or serious illness would condemn a prisoner to the "sick transports."

The second group to be condemned was the "inferior races." One spring evening in 1942 when the whole camp was lined up for roll call, the prisoners suddenly froze with horror when shots pounded in their ears from nearby and they realized that the period of executions had begun at Ravensbrueck. Ten Polish women were "liberated" in this manner. Subsequently we had to line up many evenings and stand rigid and tense listening to shots, and sometimes cries, from the other side of the wall.

Soon this ordeal was replaced by

the transport of truck-loads of prisoners to the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Dessau. At first we did not understand, but when their clothes and personal effects, such as their combs and false teeth, came back, we knew with horror what it meant. The first transports were made up of Jewish women. Later, as more and more prisoners were brought in from the occupied countries, they included large numbers of Poles and other East Europeans, and members of the French Resistance. I do not know whether a gas chamber was built in at Ravensbrueck; it is fairly certain that from time to time a mobile gas chamber was used. At any rate, in the last years, two crematoriums were built, and the guards were fond of pointing to the black belching smoke that poured out of them day and night and telling us our only way out of Ravensbrueck would be "up the chimney."

In the winter of 1944-45 the glow at nights was almost always there. Every woman of fifty, every woman with grey hair, every woman who had been ill, trembled when the SS doctor-in-charge came around. It was said that he just took a glance at face and hair and passed his verdict of life or death on that. Women with grey or white hair made frantic efforts to dye it as best they could with a paste made from water and soot. But then word went around that the SS doctor was judging solely by the legs. A woman with

thin, bony legs or with thick ankles and swollen legs was lost. There was nothing anyone could do about that. The only salvation was to get into one of the workshops or one of the labor gangs, as the victims were chosen from those who were left behind as unfit for work.

WITH ALL THEIR HORROR these transports headed for the gas chambers were never quite the shock to me that they were to the other prisoners and the outside world. For in Stalin's camps I had become familiar with death by extermination. The methods of the NKVD were more clumsy, less abrupt, and therefore less immediately shocking. But they were equally deliberate and equally sure. Moreover, there was less difference in the kind of victims selected for transportation than the outside world imagines. In Russia there were also "sick transports," though not so called. A Soviet prisoner who is sick or old or too weak to work is loaded into a truck some morning and whisked off to what is called an "invalid camp." The name sounds harmless — the Communists have a way of adopting the terms of civilized morality — but the ration in that camp is 200 grams of bread a day, and death supervenes in one to two months. We all knew this at Karaganda, and when one of our fellow prisoners left for the "invalid camp," we said goodbye with the same tearful finality as when a "sick

transport" at Ravensbrueck carried off a friend or bunk-mate.

There were other sure places of extermination in Russia — "death camps," the prisoners called them, places in the far north or northeast where conditions were such that the hardest peasants could survive only a year or two. If two political prisoners became friends, one of them was practically sure to be sent to such a camp. To be a foreigner — a Pole, Czech, German, Austrian, Hungarian — was also a presumption in favor of this "death sentence." For although the ideology supporting it differs, there is the same intolerance of foreigners in Russia as there was in Nazi Germany. As early as 1938, when the world was first aroused against Hitler's insane persecution of Jews, thousands of men in the Soviet Union were being condemned to death at hard labor for the sole crime of being born of a foreign parent. Hundreds of ardent Communists — Czech, German, Austrian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian — who had made the pilgrimage to Moscow as to Mecca, were arrested and thrown into prison soon after their arrival because they were foreigners. In the Soviet prisons and camps I met women who had been sentenced to five or ten years of hard labor because they had once been married to a man of foreign origin, though the marriage may have ended twenty years be-

fore. Since the war this discrimination against foreigners has grown more extreme. Trainloads of prisoners are today being carted off regularly from the occupied countries. And Soviet citizens who were captured by the Nazis are shipped off to the remotest death camps of Siberia on the ground that they have been contaminated by their stay in a capitalist — a foreign — country.

THUS, to one who experienced them both, the difference between the prison camps of Stalin and Hitler were not profound. In a gen-

eral way they stemmed from the differences between the two countries: one industrialized, cultured, famed for efficiency, opulent and up-to-date; the other backward, poor, unlettered, untrained in the refinements of civilized society. If you ask which camps were worse, the Nazi or the Soviet, the answer must obviously depend on the nature and habits of the person you ask. For my part, I find the idea of a choice between these two hideous destinies unbearable. I could not, in my right mind, *choose* either one.

The Other Half

On their road to Susa [the two Spartans] presented themselves before Hydarnes. This Hydarnes was a Persian by birth, and had the command of all the nations that dwelt along the sea-coast of Asia. He accordingly showed them hospitality and invited them to a banquet, where, as they feasted, he said to them, "Men of Lacedaemon, why will you not consent to be friends with the king? You have but to look at me and my fortune to see that the king knows well how to honor merit. In like manner you yourselves, were you to make your submission to him, would receive at his hands, seeing that he deems you men of merit, some government in Greece."

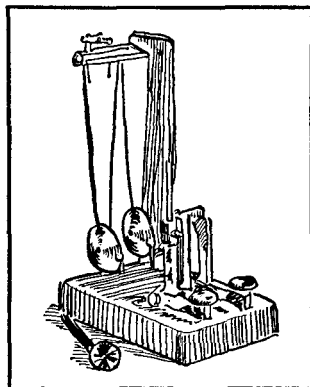
"Hydarnes," they answered, "you are a one-sided counsellor. You have experience of half of the matter, but the other half is beyond your knowledge. A slave's life you understand, but never having tasted liberty, you can not tell whether it be sweet or no. Had you known what freedom is, you would have bidden us fight for it, not with the spear only, but with the battle-axe."

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Opinions

from

the Chronoscope



From the most popular "information" program on television — Longines Chronoscope — THE MERCURY brings its readers each month a few carefully selected opinions. The program is televised each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 11 p.m. Eastern Standard Time by CBS (Channel 2). William Bradford Huie, THE MERCURY's editor, conducts the discussions on these programs, which feature leading national and international figures, with a guest editor. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor or sponsor.

Mr. Dulles on U. S. Policy, China and MacArthur

MR. HUIE: Mr. Dulles, you have a splendid reputation for objectivity among most Americans, and I am sure that our audience tonight would like your views on the general world situation. Now, sir, in your opinion are we stronger this year as against Russia than we were last year?

MR. DULLES: I think probably not. It's pretty hard to judge these things, but my estimate would be that the tide is still running against us. Everywhere I look around the world the question is what maybe we are going to lose

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

BEVERLY BAXTER, M.P.

GOVERNOR EARL WARREN

SENATOR ESTES KEFAUVER

next. We seem to be on the defensive and they're on the offensive.

MR. HUIE: The question is what are we going to lose each year, more

than what we are going to gain.

MR. DULLES: You can look around the whole circle of the world and find one spot after another after another after another where the question is: Are we going to lose this bit of the free world? Is it going to be Iran, or is it going to be Egypt, or is it going to be Indo-China, or is it going to be Korea, or what's it going to be?

MR. HUIE: Now sir, do you see any way by which we can reverse this process so that we can gain hope again in America?

MR. DULLES: I absolutely am convinced that we can do it. We have been entirely negative in our approach and we have lost the good old-fashioned American dynamism. When we were a little nation and just getting started, we stood for something that was so vital and so dramatic and exciting in the world that everybody everywhere wanted to follow our example. We were a dynamic force in the world. We can recapture that American spirit.

MR. HENRY HAZLITT: What specifically should we do in the case of China, to take an example?

MR. DULLES: The first thing is to make clear that we have a positive policy, that we do not accept as permanent this Communization of the Chinese mainland. A good many people out there wonder about that. They're not quite

convinced as to just what our real intentions are. Many people who would be with us are lying low because they don't really trust our intentions adequately. We must clear up that doubt and make clear what our intentions are. Thus opportunity after opportunity will be created, in my opinion.

MR. HAZLITT: Well, do you think we should do that by such actions as sending help to the guerrilla forces on the mainland and giving further help to Chiang Kai-shek?

MR. DULLES: I believe that we should give help and comfort to people anywhere who are resistant to Communism. I don't think we want to have a war because war is a thing upon which Communism thrives and breeds. But we certainly can give the thing which is needed most of all — moral aid and comfort. The thing that is lacking is a quality I would try to bring in, which is more of a hopeful, purposeful, spirited dynamism.

MR. HAZLITT: They want to be sure we are on their side?

MR. DULLES: They want to be sure we are on their side, and they want the moral comfort that comes with that.

MR. HUIE: I believe it was Tom Paine who once contributed the statement that the cause of America is the cause of mankind. Do you think it might be hopeful

if we would start with a declaration that we Americans are going to help the cause of freedom throughout the world again?

MR. DULLES: I think it is well time that we should make that clear again. As long as we stood for that in the world, we were on the offensive; the despots were on the defensive; we were secure.

MR. HUIE: Now, coming back to your reputation for objectivity, you have had perhaps the best chance to study the results that we have obtained in Japan through five years of occupation policy. Specifically, you studied carefully the record of General MacArthur. Now, would you like to give our audience your appraisal of General MacArthur's work in the Orient?

MR. DULLES: I think that he did a perfectly amazing job in Japan. There's never in history been an occupation which has been as fruitful as that was. He combined magnanimity with justice; he gained the respect of the people; and he brought the Japanese people along very far, I think, on the road to being genuine self-governing people. He introduced many reforms — talk about the land reforms of the Communists, the land reforms that MacArthur put through in Japan are infinitely superior to anything that has been done in the Communist countries; and a good Bill of

Rights; and labor unions beginning to take hold. An amazing job. He inspired this peace treaty. We never would have had this peace treaty [the Japanese Peace Treaty] if it were not for the talks we had with General MacArthur, when I was over there with Secretary Johnson, then Secretary of Defense, and Senator Bradley in June 1950. It was those talks we had there with General MacArthur, and MacArthur's conviction that the occupation had come to its normal end and we should give the Japanese back their freedom and independence — that was the thing that inspired this peace treaty.

MR. HUIE: Mr. Dulles, do you expect that we Americans can do something hopeful, and do you think that we will do something hopeful for the world in the way of enunciating a new policy?

MR. DULLES: I am absolutely convinced, Mr. Huie, that we can. We have been looking at this whole world picture through the wrong end of the telescope. We just see our own trouble, our own weaknesses, and the other fellow looks strong and hard and invulnerable. But if we turn the telescope around and look at it the right way, we would see the resources that we have, the hope that we can inspire in people. We can see the oppression of the despotism there — the fact that

even within Russia there are fifteen million people in captive prison camps. They [the Soviets] only rule by terrorism. That situation ought to be a pushover — it would have been in the old days.

Mr. Baxter on Britain's Recognition of Red China

MR. HAZLITT: The day after Mr. Churchill's speech [before the Congress of the United States] Raymond Daniel of the *New York Times*, writing from London, said that Mr. Churchill's speech had been received in London with a mixture of admiration and dismay. Now, do you think that that would represent the actual situation there, or do you think that's an exaggerated statement of the situation?

MR. BAXTER: I think with admiration, to a very considerable extent — that I can understand. Dismay, I think perhaps a stronger word than applies to the situation. We don't go in very much for dismay anyway over there. You can't, in a climate like that; you can't go to extremes. But I have no doubt that the Churchill speech caused some raising, shall we say, of the eyebrows, because after all we have recognized the Chinese Government. The statement that we were ready to walk into China with both fists if China didn't do so-and-so was very interesting, and certainly

it was a departure from the policy of the Socialist Government.

MR. HAZLITT: Do you think it was wise, Mr. Baxter, in retrospect, for the British Government to have recognized the Chinese Communists?

MR. BAXTER: Well, in many ways I didn't like it, but I was in opposition then in the Conservative Party, and the Socialists were the Government. But, may I tell you something that even such distinguished publicists and editors as you two apparently do not realize. Although we, by ourselves, recognized the Chinese Government, it was with the full knowledge, and certainly not the disapproval, of your own State Department. The reason for that is quite simple. It was a good idea for America that we should have an eye on China — just the same as in 1940, it was very useful to us while fighting that you should have a representative at Vichy. We wanted an eye in France.

MR. HUIE: Are you telling our audience tonight, Mr. Baxter, that before Britain officially recognized Red China, our State Department knew that you were going to recognize Red China and that our State Department approved your action?

MR. BAXTER: I make that statement that they did not disapprove, and therefore if one does not disap-

prove, you may assume he approves. I certainly make that statement believing it to be true.

Governor Warren on Socialized Medicine and Welfare

MR. DONALD I. ROGERS: I noticed you made a Lincoln Day speech in Boston yesterday, Governor, in which you urged the Republicans to think anew, not fear such terms as social security and collective bargaining, civil liberties. Now some of the eastern Republicans, I must admit, have accused you of being a left-winger or even a Socialist. Would you care to comment on that?

GOVERNOR WARREN: Well, of course, we have some of those out in California too, and out in the West, who are thinking of days gone by. We have Republicans out there who would like to turn the clock back if they could. But I don't happen to be one of those. I believe this country was built on faith and not on fear, and I believe that if we have faith in our institutions, we can believe that there isn't any problem before the American people that can't be solved by our system.

MR. ROGERS: Would you describe yourself as a Socialist?

GOVERNOR WARREN: Oh, in no sense of the word. I have an abomination for Socialism. I believe that our system is the greatest system that's ever been devised by man.

But I believe that some of these people who use the word Socialism very lightly these days, and very often, are unable to distinguish between Socialism and social progress.

MR. ROGERS: To be specific, sir, would you say, for instance, that socialized medicine is social progress or Socialism?

GOVERNOR WARREN: I would say socialized medicine is Socialism, but I don't believe in socialized medicine. I do believe that there can be social progress made so far as medical care is concerned. I believe that the cost of medical care has become so high that it is moving away from the person of average income, and I believe that it is the duty of our country and the duty of everyone in government to try to find a way to make that good medical care that we have in this country available to those who need it without any socialization of medicine whatsoever.

MR. HUIE. To enable our audience to understand more specifically your views, let's take the New and Fair Deals. You are a critic of the Democratic National Administration, are you not?

GOVERNOR WARREN: Yes. I have criticized the administration in a good many respects.

MR. HUIE: During the last twenty years our government has gotten larger and larger, and the gov-

ernment has assumed more and more responsibilities. You have not been a critic of the assumption of those responsibilities by the national government, have you? Generally speaking, you are not afraid of the fact that the Federal Government has grown larger and larger, are you?

GOVERNOR WARREN: If you mean assuming the solution of problems of the American people, I would say no to you. I do believe that the Federal Government, in the method that it has set up these programs, has unnecessarily injured the Federal Government. I believe that they have failed to give the responsibilities to the states and local governments that they should have in order to keep our system virile.

MR. HUIE: You are critical only of the method of administration?

GOVERNOR WARREN: In the main it is the manner in which they have done it.

MR. HUIE: So, as a Republican President, your business would not be to repeal anything they have done, but simply to tidy it up and be a better housekeeper?

GOVERNOR WARREN: I don't know of any essential program that has been initiated by the Federal Government in recent years that I would repeal, and I don't know of any such essential welfare program that wasn't adopted by a bipartisan vote in the Congress.

And I might say this also. I don't know a Republican candidate at the present time who has not personally advocated every one of these programs at one time or another in his career.

MR. HUIE: Then what is the essential difference in philosophy between the Republican and Democratic parties in 1952?

GOVERNOR WARREN: Limiting the answer to your question of social welfare programs, I would say that the tendency of the present administration has been to centralize the administration of all of these programs in Washington, and to build up gigantic bureaus for that administration. I believe, on the other hand, that if we are to maintain both the spirit as well as the form of our institutions, it is essential for us to keep state government virile and active and responsive to the needs of the people. I believe that the states should not be by-passed, that they should be trusted with the administration of these programs. I would do that, and I believe it would have a great effect upon the government of this country.

Senator Kefauver on Social Progress and Foreign Policy

MR. HUIE: Senator Kefauver, the members of our Chronoscope audience, of course, remember you from your sensational crime investigations. They know that

you are the vigorous Tennessean who now aspires to the Democratic nomination to the presidency. Tonight our audience would appreciate your views on some of the political issues. If you are running for the Democratic nomination, what is your principal criticism of the Democratic Administration that now exists?

SENATOR KEFAUVER: I think I might make this clear in the beginning, I am running on my own. I think we have had two great and fine Democratic administrations. I have supported the foreign policy and the economic and social programs of both Presidents Roosevelt and Truman.

MR. HUIE: You are a New Dealer and a Fair Dealer?

SENATOR KEFAUVER: I do not classify myself on the dealers. I believe in progress. I believe that the American people have made great advancement both in our foreign policy and our domestic policy under the last Democratic administrations. If you want to know why I am running for President, I feel that of course every American boy aspires to run. I want to do what I can to see that we continue with an aggressive foreign policy and that we do not abandon our place of leadership in the world. I am very much interested in seeing that we continue to have our social and

economic gains. I do want to place additional emphasis upon the necessity of taking affirmative action in the effort against corruption and I want to see the Federal Government take a more leading part both in the Congress and executive departments in that respect. Also, I feel that we must get on a sounder financial basis, that we cannot go on year after year on the basis of deficit financing.

MR. HAZLITT: I take it the difference between you and the President is that you do not feel there is sufficient drastic dealing with the corruption issue or a sufficiently adequate dealing and that you are a little worried about the spending program. Would those be your two views?

SENATOR KEFAUVER: I think in fairness, I should say that a great deal has been done both in government and out in this effort. I think that in Congress, and in the executive department, in our country in general at all levels of government, we ought to place more emphasis upon the effort against the racketeer and the wrong-doer.

MR. HUIE: As a political figure you want to extend the philosophy of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations?

SENATOR KEFAUVER: Generally, that's true. I want to see them carried on vigorously. I think I

have some minor points of difference in our foreign policy, but I think we have done well in maintaining and carrying out our position of leadership in the world in the interest of peace. I think in the United Nations and the Atlantic Pact we have done things that were necessary along that line.

MR. HAZLITT: You are not concerned with our being over-extended abroad. You believe that we do have commitments abroad, and that we must continue to spend large sums of money abroad and that we must continue to station American troops abroad and be greatly concerned with what goes on in the rest of the world?

SENATOR KEFAUVER: Yes, I do. I think that we have to share our part of the responsibility along with other nations in the North Atlantic. I think we must join with other free people in the interest of peace. I think we must build toward a system of collective security that is going to reverse the trend of war every twenty-five years. Now, as to the exact commitments that we should spend on military aid abroad, on economic assistance, I have a feeling that over a long period of time unless the condition gets worse,

we are going to have to trim down even our defense spending so that we will not be bankrupting ourselves. In our Armed Services commitments, we have discovered a great deal of waste both in our military spending abroad and handling of our Armed Services here.

MR. HAZLITT: What are the chief issues that will be faced by the voters in the coming campaign? I am talking here about the Presidential campaign, not about the primaries.

SENATOR KEFAUVER: I think the general issue is one of foreign policy—are we going to go on and strengthen and better our foreign policy and follow through with our position of leadership or are we going to hedge and go back to some extent to isolation? That is one side. The other side is whether the American people are going to believe that the Democratic Party can be better trusted to carry out our social and economic program than the Republican Party. I think those two things will be the issues. Of course, a big issue in government at this time is cleaning up any crime and corruption and taking leadership in the interest of the battle against the cartel of crime.

Wyndham Lewis

THE ROT

Wyndham Lewis' novels, like his political books, have always had great topical interest, and this is especially true of *Rotting Hill*, his latest work of fiction, from which the following story is taken. They have also been distinguished by the remarkable quality and beauty of their writing.

The British critic, Geoffrey Grigson, found in Mr. Lewis' new novel "some of the most admirable prose of our time." And in a recent evaluation of his works the *London Times* wrote: "Mr. Lewis' style is . . . the hardest, sharpest and most distinctive in modern literature."

England's current revival of interest in the writings of the painter-novelist, who is slowly going blind, will be echoed this spring in America by the publication on April 9 of *Rotting Hill*, followed by a series of new editions of Mr. Lewis' *The Revenge for Love*, *Tarr*, and *The Wild Body*.

Rotting Hill, by Wyndham Lewis, copyright 1952, Henry Regnery Co., Chicago Ill., \$3.00

THE ROT

THAT THERE WAS MUCH ROTTING of the spirit in this blistering period, of what we pretentiously term history, was not hidden from me exactly. But I must confess that it was with surprise that, resting my hand carelessly upon a windowsill at our apartment, I found my nails sinking into the wood. The wood in our flat had up till then behaved on all occasions like wood. It was a week later, I think, that putting my hand out in the dark to turn on the light, my finger plunged into the wood of a door. These were my first contacts with the rot.

The following are the main facts about the rot. As might be expected, or it may be better to say, perhaps, as is not to be wondered at, something like a pestilence is ravaging the London buildings about here. They call it "dry rot" — a fungus that consumes the wood. Even the reddest and most beefy-looking buildings are rotting away where they stand, except for those within which the builder is blasting at the affected part with his blow-lamp,

putting in new wood for rotted. For one house that is derotted, three remain in a state of rot. The builder is restricted to what can be done with scraps. Wood is a shortage as much as fats in England, and it is the wood that rots, since it belongs to the living order. A black market exists in wood as in everything. It is but a trickle of illicit timber in Rotting Hill.¹

Hundreds of streets in London were uninhabited during much of the six years of war, the houses shuttered and fireless. In the damp winters the fungoid condition, the dry rot, developed in the beams, joists, architraves, jambs, window-frames, floorboards of these un-lived-in places. As it is, when decomposition has gone so far that you can poke your finger into the wood of a mantel-piece as if it were made of cheese, an order may be obtained for a few

¹ A friend in Washington now calls this quarter of London "Rotting Hill," since hearing of my ordeal with the rot. I have adopted his expressive substitution to maintain a proper anonymity.

slices of timber out of government stock. The condition of flagrant rot is checked by a sceptical inspector.

Compared with Hamburg, or Dresden, London is unmarked. Then the Nazis were such great gentlemen, they mostly bombed the poor. Yet every district has its quota of gaps or of ruins, and these wet draughty weed-gardens — rain-filled cavities of cellars that have lost their houses — serve, I think, to prolong the rot. Many of the gaps and ruins we know will remain. The present rulers are in no hurry to reconstitute London as it was: they have not much love, in fact, for Dick Whittington's city. If actually it *did* drop to pieces it would not break their hearts. So there it is, a monstrous derelict of a city — always the first to be bombed, the last to receive its allotment of bananas when a shipment of them docks at Bristol (the manufacturing North because of the big labour towns is favoured) and so it is with all unrationed delicacies: unpopular as a capital with the ruling intellectuals as the traditional headquarters of the Court, too redolent as well of history — womb of the Mother of Parliaments in an age impatient of parliaments; haunted by the stout shades of those parliament men Hampden, Eliot, and Pym — reeking in their nostrils of freedom: London, built upon a bog and cursed with world-famous fogs: every house in it that has a crack from the blast of a bomb and dies at

last of chronic dry rot, and is carted off to the potter's field for decayed old buildings, is to be warmly congratulated.

Like Vienna, this city has no meaning henceforward. It is too vast a head for so puny a body — since most of the gargantuan colonial padding that made Britain (Great Britain!) look so enormous has been shed — as an actor playing Falstaff, the play done, unhooks his make-believe belly and unpacks his bloated limbs. So we get down to the actual modest dimensions. True, we still swell airily *in vacuo*, an immense bubble of 50 million souls, blown out with American dollars. But that will burst. It cannot do otherwise — when the next war comes, or the next American slump, or even without them — than explode with a sickening roar.

UP ON ROTTING HILL, beamed on by Negroes, shadowed by Afrianders, displaced in queues by displaced persons, ignored by Brahmins, run over by hasty "fiddlers" of various extraction, we are foreign (or like a town in the U. S.) and people come and go. The shops are full of xenophobic growlings, but there are no bitings. The houses are camps, towering brick camps, with gouged-out, clammy basements, packed with transients. We are famous for our *spivs*. But that is a disreputable élite, and there is the rank and file. A news agent where I deal divides our co-citizens into two

main groups: (1) Those who bet; and (2) Those addicted to spiritualism. This he bases upon the papers and magazines most in demand, and of which he stocks and sells fantastic numbers. The second of these passions, the occultist, finds its votaries mainly among the English. But with those who play the horses there is nothing so narrowly national.

Better lose your money on a horse or a dog than be fooled out of it! They speak like that. As to mysticism, and its big vogue (five "lodges" in Rotting Hill): people troop as they are now doing to sit entranced before pythonesses who bring tidings from the other side of death to enable them to turn their backs if only for a while upon life — more vile and ill-smelling daily. Not the stench of power-politics alone, of which the press is full, but the decomposition of the public will is perhaps the worst wretchedness of all, Aneurin B.'s version of a will-less society being too exclusive. Though the occultist fans do not proceed to analysis, anything but — they merely feel that "nothing is worth while."

ON ROTTING HILL the rubbish is collected Saturdays, but nevertheless the pavements are littered — with Rotting-hillers. Some get stuck in doorways. I picked one up under a lamp-post the other day and took him up to draw. He sat well, staring blankly at the blankness of my walls. He had practically no will left. Had I

boxed his ears — instead of giving him half a crown — he would have wobbled about a little but that is all. The public's reactions are so jaded that it has sunk almost to coolie levels. The English had a public conscience as big as a house. But its fibre is devoured. It is completely rotted. Sanctimonious busy-bodies no longer, they are very callous, their own lot exciting them as little as that of others. If you informed the public that fifty thousand Finns or Italians had been massacred — by anybody — it would have as much effect as if you informed it that fifty thousand mackerel had been caught. Take away tomorrow all its sugar, for instance, and all butcher's meat (without replacing the latter by anything, except what only the richest can buy). Nothing would happen, except that people would develop complaints for which a sugarless and proteinless diet is responsible. And of course there is no tax you cannot impose upon the English. They expect it.

This picture is only overpainted, if you wish, for an underpainting of it. For there is no moderate image of atomic politics, national bankruptcy, murderous taxation, black-market immunity, jobbery, world-inflation, populations drained of hope. But *no picture at all* exists in the case of massive sections of our society. These reactions — even largely, it might be said, these conditions — do not apply to a massive

minority of our people. For of course there are those who have so little they are hardly taxable: even some who — talking of meat — never had much meat. (Their wives might beg a scrap off the fat butcher. But there were no ration-books as today, conferring a *right* to the best meats in the shop. The slum butcher too is officially allotted under rationing the same quality meat as the butcher for the Ritz or for the King and he gets it.) If the untaxables, and lower than them the obligatory vegetarians under Victoria, got to themselves a *picture*, it would be starry-bright in 1948. The ration-book is their charter. Supertax is a tax levied for their beautiful eyes. But at all levels the working class, even the quite taxable, is elated: the source of the elation being even more sentimental than economic.

I FIND I HAVE BEEN PROVIDING with a deeper perspective than I had intended my narrative of the rot. One rot truly is involved in another rot. From the epidemic ravaging “better-class” houses to the decay of the classes for which they were built is a logical transition. Returning, finally, to the immediate business of the rot in our apartment: up to the time that one of the windows began to leave its socket and the wind to rush in I made no move. Then of course I did. Upon the telephone the landlord, or more exactly his deputy, informed me sighing

that he knew what it was. Oh he did! I remarked disagreeably. But he answered gruffly that in other parts of the building — comprising a number of shops and apartments — there were very bad cases. I was not unfortunately the only one — he wished I was.

His builder’s specialist, a cockney carpenter, was at hand; in fact he was at work upon a rapidly rotting off-licence. He presented himself at once, and flung himself into the tracking of the rot with the avidity of a ferret. Upstairs and downstairs, in this “maisonette,” he tracked it down, charting his progress upon a piece of soiled paper.

The carpenter looked me over this first time — I had answered his off-hand knocks — as if probing for symptoms of the malignant fungus which was disintegrating our premises. Evidently he found me built of some substance inhospitable to the rot. He lost interest. The little fires went out in his eyes. But the fact that I was uninteresting because unpleasantly free of dry rot did not endear me to him, or cause him to forget that with a fraction of the money I squandered on my books, he could build an A One rabbit hutch and get Minnie (daughter) the openings to make her a Screen Star. Young Fred (son) might shine too, in some capacity, if less glamorously. Now, to indulge this urgent son of toil, Fred (the carpenter’s name as well as that of his son) had

been led to understand — not by me — that *yes*, in forty-eight hours, work on part of the nether premises could begin. I now said *No*. He evinced no surprise. It is only nice people with dry rot in them somewhere (as in one mood he would feel and from one angle) who can be depended on to say *yes* all the time. The rot softens the fibres of the will. Dry rotted yes-people are as clay in the hands of carpenters.

As I listened subsequently to this man amok in the bedroom underneath, I recalled the humped humanity that shuffled off, cool and relaxed, when he found I was a *no*-person. He had shrugged his humped shoulders and snarled a cockney half-smile at me, with one evil tooth, saying, "Very good, sir. It's as you wish." Actually I was worse as he saw it than the rotten, in and out of whose residences he moved with such dark satisfaction. I belonged to the rot — to a rotted social class: was tenant in a building rotted down to its cellars, lived after an outmoded pattern (a "blooming artist") — rotted and was answerable for rot — rot which began to hem me in, madly nourished by my antidiluvian life-habits. That the dry rot was the landlord's affair was, of course, a major factor. I did not pay. Not paying, I was at most an obstruction, not a source of authority.

The carpenter stood out from the rest of the workmen by reason of the fact that he worked. He must have

had a big crack in his palate which he had cemented up, he spoke stiffly, where his mouth writhed up on to his cheek, out of a bitter hole. He had dirty eyes — the face was so untidy no eyes could have looked otherwise, to be sure, but they were blood-shot themselves, and of tobacco-colour green, with embers of hot red. The public house and the blow-lamp between them had perpetuated facial eruptions. An uncut moustache served as a disreputable valance for the mouth. The chin in its cockney droop marked him as a spectator of his own aggressions.

As it was very difficult for me to leave London at that time, the arrangement was that while the builders were downstairs we should live upstairs. The downstairs finished, we should change places, they coming up to the studio floor. And such was the order followed. When the carpenter began work it was in the nether premises, in some respects the more rotten of the two. We had, according to plan, gone to live on the upper floor.

WHEN FIRST WE WERE INFORMED that our apartment must be derotted, we had not the remotest idea of what awaited us. It only slowly dawned on us that this was a major operation, at which we were to assist. But we did not have to wait long for enlightenment. As a fact, the carpenter moved in to pull down, weeks before the building-up

again could start, the order not having come through from the Town Hall releasing the necessary material. Neurotic as this man was, he could not keep his hands off it. He would have demolished the entire building had it lain in his power to do so — the entire quarter, too: and, on a particularly good day, all of Greater London.

The realization of what we had let ourselves in for involved a dual shock. First we saw that we were to cohabit with earthquake. Secondly came understanding of the time factor; in other words, the immense mouthfuls of time demanded by this inane operation, because — oh, because of the same crass agency that eats up all the rest of our time, in wars, in queues, in rot, in all the subsidiaries of the central inhumanity of man. We had some such figure as three weeks in our minds at the beginning, or a little over. But a sleepy lazy gang (living in a Dalton daydream of booming wages, cheap money, short hours) could make such short work in every sense of three weeks that if you told the time by their handiwork it would seem to be three days that had passed, not three weeks.

The preliminary stripping of the place, parking of furniture in a grey mass, was unexpectedly disagreeable. There are different ways of stripping a life, of disintegrating a domestic organism. There are seemly, even ceremonious, undressings. There is

everything, between an invitation to a pleasing *déshabille*, and a brutal *debagging*. There is a way of turning a chair upside down (if that chair has known all its life the pressure of your bottom) that is an effront, or of handing down an oil-painting of a Buckinghamshire backyard from its nail that is an outrage.

THE INVASION began — with the stripping and stacking for its breathless overture — when we were only half awake. The carpenter and his mates, this first time, were shuffling about outside the front door long before 8 A.M. At 9 we left them, Mrs. Clark having set out our breakfast of “hot roll mix” (from a friend in Baton Rouge), Cuban Honey (a friend in New York), fried eggs (from another friend, in Montreal), and tea on the ration; expressive of what the tea-merchants of Colombo think of their ex-lords and masters. At ten we sat in our vast roof-room digesting the disagreeable reality downstairs. “I feel like a bruised grape in a basketful of glass marbles,” observed my wan wife, quoting a Canadian tulip.

Then — preceded by a brief silence, upstairs and downstairs, and as it seemed outside as well — the first blow fell. “Ye olde Cottage” effect, produced, we discovered, partly by authentic wooden beams (now turning, of course, into mushrooms), in part plaster boxes masquerading as beams — all that went first. This

we divined at the time, and afterwards inspection confirmed, since the ceiling eight or nine inches under the soles of our shoes jumped violently. We were glad the rot had found out so palpable a fake as the archaic rafters, of which we were ashamed if anything: but the carpenter thought his blows fell upon our hearts. The plaster boxes, beneath repeated blows from his axe, and the hammers of his men, came crashing down. We recognized immediately that we, and not the plaster, were the true target of the assault.

WITH WHAT FRENZY of accumulated resentment this man, deformed with toil, flung himself upon us. The rot was, no one could doubt it, his master passion. But he was socially minded — he knew how to give his rot an historico-economic perspective too, being no fool like the painters (without exceptions) and deeper than the plasterer. We and the rot were one, we were involved as if we had been wood. Was it not *our* rot? The rot existed for us. If there was a fungus here instead of the wood which honest workmen forty years before had lifted into place, we had produced the fungus — an emanation of social decay. Were it eventually necessary to pull down the house, *we* ought to be demolished with it. Such was the line of feeling at least of the master-mind among what eventually became an army of invaders.

The token liquidation was taking place in the room in which we slept, so we congratulated ourselves upon having so thoroughly emptied it beforehand. A shambles of plaster and wood must suddenly be there — though when later we actually saw the rugged landscape of piled-up *débris* we were astonished: and now it sounded as if the carpenter were savaging the walls. But almost buckling the floor, the timber of the chairs in which we sat recording a maximal shock, they burst out into a short passage, and, in an exceptionally paranoiac rush of the carpenter's, a cataract of plaster which must have shaken Marble Arch and the whole neighbourhood smote the floor of our nether premises.

"Is this in fact token class-war?" was my question: and my life-mate answered and laughed: "It is so to speak token class-war." "Is it not getting out of hand?" I pondered aloud. "There is, in effect, a sensible deterioration," came the response, "in the situation, as that regards the workmen in our nether premises." I recommenced: "Is this in fact hatred for those who dwell in posh dry-rotted flats . . . ?" "Not posh. Dry-rotted." But I resumed: "Of relative magnificence, in select neighbourhood — yes, in this fringe of Rotting Hill we rub up against admirals and generals and tread on brigadiers — in their turn they bathe across the mews from Millionaires. Comparatively modest as our abode may be,

it exceeds the limits of his dwarf exchequer." (I cast my eye down through the ceiling at the carpenter.) "We are economic giants to this pigmy purse. If men were their money, he would reach to my knees."

So, thinly disguised as care for the health of buildings, it was reaching the point of open confessions — when, axe in hand, the carpenter would appear at the head of the stairs and snarl:

"You can keep your plaster and your rotten wood, Mr. Lewis! *You* are the dry rot I'm after!" At the latest mountainous fall of plaster underneath, I allowed my eyes to rest upon a drawer where an old, rusted, practically token, revolver probably was.

HAVING ENGAGED FOR SOME DAYS in unrestrained and wholesale destruction, the carpenter and his mates melted away. They left behind them exposed and mutilated ceilings, gaping floors, bald patches, gashes, rents, and holes everywhere; tottering doors, unframed windows. I had not had much contact with the carpenter. So far as I was concerned one day he and the others failed to appear, that was all. The usual noises failed to occur. There was peace. And so day after day, peace. Still this peace of course was outrageous too, because we wanted to occupy our apartment, not remain camped in a corner of it. On the telephone

the builder acquainted me with the true position. Nothing could be done until the order came through.

For the rest, the carpenter had done just as he pleased. Provided he did not injure my goods I could not — as he knew — stop him from knocking the walls down if he liked. There was no supervision. No one in Rotting Hill in 1947 — landlord or builder or anybody — cared enough about what happened to climb a flight of forty stairs, or for that matter to cross the street. My own outburst was awaited. With sultry anticipatory glee the carpenter slogged unnecessary objects unnecessarily hard at inconvenient times. Apart from clearing him unceremoniously out of the toilet where invariably he took up his stand, blow-lamp at full blast, around the time he knew access would, to late breakfasters, be imperative, no scintilla of criticism could he carry off to magnify for the purpose of complaints-about-complaints: "As usual, interference on part of tenant with work of man doing his job!" He interested me too much for me to feel anger. Still I was in no mood to furnish amusement. Otherwise I might have cursed him for making an uncalled-for noise, or ignoring the little fact that I after all paid the rent. That was what he wanted.

Now all the lower region of our apartment was a shrouded place of dirt and gloom. A plasterer's mixing table straddled where a comfortable

bed should be: for the plasterer and his mate had joined the carpenter upon the last day of the destruction. The Christmas blackout was the next thing to happen. So it was in fact a month or more before we saw a workman again. The plasterer came first of the main group: with him men carrying breeze cakes and sacks of cement. Then our new life began in earnest: except that often there would be a blank of two or three days, or once a week: the non-delivery of long-overdue wood-substitute accounting, they said, for the idle week.

THE WORKERS IN GENERAL were sleepily, carelessly "respectful," except for the odd reader of the *Daily Worker*. All English workmen were and are a little intoxicated with events. At long bloody last their government was in and was socialist. The days of the classes over them — calmly squatting on top — were numbered. Building trade workers as ours were — *they* knew. Didn't they go into all kinds of homes: of the rich that once was (pots o' money!) who used to keep two housemaids, a cook and a chauffeur and now had a dirty old char! Startling changes — they came across them everywhere.

Slow, halting, and meaningful spoke to one these cockney eyes, blue, brown, green and grey: indirect, still cowed in the presence of the "educated," still with their old

superstitions about rank, submissive as ever to a Lady Jingle Jones — they spoke in flashes. An exultant gutter-tongue, talked by dancing eyes, language of the small sooty shells of the cockney family unit (the blackened doll's-house with white washing on a line seen from the Golden Arrow) radiantly hailing their novel status in the new day — inferiority lifted from them for keeps. Sun-dazzled earth-worms — slaves in the Senate. Might for the Midget — Madness — MILLENNIUM.

The awakening, one felt, was of something of extraordinary age. Was not this the liberation of a being accustomed to restraint since the days of the *theow*, *laet*, *esne*, or earlier? So it was a little terrible. Has not most "liberation" in our hypocrite century proved phoney — to use the proper cheap and ugly word for what is thus exactly described? Their behaviour was in any case that of prisoners set free, or of birds released from a cage. Has England then been a concentration camp for the "lower orders," the third estate; and was the barbed wire removed and were the sentries marched off in 1945? They disported themselves, to celebrate the end of bondage, and I was too friendly toward them and too sorry for them to complain. But they relieved me of my small steel chopper.

Our section of six flats does not enjoy any access to or give access

to the other parts of the building. Upon its large autonomous stone stairway six or seven painters were at work. Their songs, shouted conversations, betokened a natural buoyancy, at having won the war, won the election, won the right to sing rather than paint. Like much joy, it was ugly. Everybody recoiled from it. But it had the pleasing effect of silencing the artificial buoyancy of the contralto Star in apartment 3, which she shared with a Czech woman-doctor, unlike herself a pessimist. It was her custom, taking herself up and down the spacious stairs, to do so with *brio*, and full-throated song — to demonstrate how beautiful, youthful, and successful she was, though in fact none of these things, as all of us knew. Or if the remains of youth were still hers, it need not, one felt, have chosen to die so noisily. As it was, if a watery English sun gazed blearily in at the window, she would richly and brilliantly exclaim “What a *glomorous* day!” Well, the painters put a stop to both the singing and expressions of youthful ecstasy: and neither, after the painters’ departure, were renewed. They out-sang her and out-shouted her. They out-youthed her: and lastly they out-successfulled her too. For were they not Dalton’s boys? And they were the merriest, noisiest, laziest in this bankrupt land — where “too much money chases too few goods” but what of it? On the Utility level nix is in short sup-

ply. We live on Utility level, for ever and ever — what of it? there won’t be no other. Hurrah for Utility-life, with money to burn in Austerity Street, at the blooming old pub at the corner. Hurrah! cried the painters as they smoked their Weights, Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

WHY MEN should work any harder than that (for the painters hardly worked at all) or be any less merry I can never sec. What is life for — to make cart horses out of monkeys? People invent objects for life. They attempt to drive us on to what they label “targets,” as if we were bullets. I secretly applauded these slothful and light-hearted workers — and almost forgave them for deliberately making it so difficult to get in and out of the house and attempting one day to ruin a glorious overcoat they resented my having. But they had better luck with the musquash of a neighbour, to which they did a lot of damage — partly high-spirits of course. Yet every morning I would open the newspaper and, harsh and minatory, the words of Cripps, economic Czar, would challenge my easy-going humanism. Just the opposite he argued to what I felt. Men must work themselves to the bone, most monotonously he repeated. To close the gap between exports and imports. To close the gap. To CLOSE the GAP! There was evidently no gap

in the building trade, or no one was conscious of any gap to fill, except in the belly and the bladder.

Here, in outline, was our workmen's working day. At 8 A.M. the workmen were supposed to arrive and start work, and the staircase painters were subject to the same time-table. In practice our workmen arrived not at 8, but 8.30. By a quarter to nine usually noises would be heard: the day's work had begun. At 10 they left in a body for tea. They returned at 10.30. At 12 o'clock they knocked off for dinner. At 1 o'clock they returned. This was the longest spell, namely two hours, passed of course in talks and in work mixed and alternating: in visits and counter-visits between rot-workers in different apartments, or flat-workers and painters, or outside friends working across the road or round the corner, or plumbers at a loose end, or marking time between two assignments of burst pipes or stuck plugs. At 3 they left for tea. At 3.30 they returned. At 4.30 they began tidying up and preparing to leave. At 5 o'clock they left. The day's work was over.

AFTER A FEW WEEKS we grew tired of their joy. When at last work moved upstairs, and we had them *overhead* — plasterers, painters, electricians and carpenters on occasion all at one time — their joy became for us an agony. One day I met the master plasterer hurrying out.

Through his cement-grimed lips, coldly cross, he muttered: "Nothing but a blooming boys' school up there. The noise they're making I shall be glad when they hop it, all of them!" The plasterer alluded to two diminutive boy-electricians and a friend — the firm seemingly had no grown-up workmen to spare in that department. With what misgivings I had watched them for a moment gamboling and frisking as they attended to our lighting system! The boss looked around fourteen. No wonder boys are impossible to get for messenger offices as bell-hops, or to do errands. Later I could hear their shrill shrieks of delight and bumpittybump went the ceiling. Because these noise-makers were so minuscule, in so remote an age-class from himself, the plasterer could see them and hear them. Even he left the house in disgust. But when the whole place rocked with heavyweight lightheartedness his eardrums recorded it, if at all, with indulgence.

But to finish with these problem-guests — my big house-party to hunt the rot, which, like barbaric celebrations, endured for many weeks. The end came in pandemonium. Finally it was to heavyweight aggression I succumbed. I had been writing, and I was reading by myself in the lower flat. The book in my hand bristled with examples of injustice, the poor man wronged, the worker cheated: whether authentic or not who could say? A propagandist

record of experiences in Stalinist Russia, for which a Trotsky adherent was responsible.

I put down what I was reading very often to reflect on the inner meanings of this sort of book (if you chopped away enough of the humbug of politics to contact the inner truths); of the material with which power worked, the human mass namely, and the numerous disguises adopted by power — disguises imposed by the sensitivity of the human material, by the dangers involved in handling energies so disproportionately vast compared with the physical insignificance of the “master mind.” Power does not like to have a bronco beneath it — meaning a violent or spirited people. Problems of political liberty presented themselves of course. But political liberty is not an Asiatic commodity, and I doubt if it can be a Russian — not as my friends upstairs would have understood the free. You would not have discovered it, in the ancient world, anywhere on the Asiatic or African shores of the Latin Sea. The Romans and Germans practised it at different times. England is eccentric, but it has excelled as a great and celebrated centre of liberty for the privileged.

THE ENGLISH have bred as spectacular a breed of underdogs as any dog-lover could wish! But at last, approaching mid-century, the *whole* of that great dog has been

dragged out from underneath in Britain: and does he shake himself and *bark* hysterically! He does that. And shows few signs of wanting to bite the decadent old top dog, who does not seem to mind much either, but queues up for bones and quietly takes those bottom dog doesn't want. It is a superb feat! (I grew enthusiastic as I thought of the *whole* of this vast dog.) He will never go back again — not in the same place anyway, or *beneath the same dog*. Whether in Russia they had ever had, even for a few weeks at the beginning, that grand feeling, was very doubtful: that sensation of being free men which our people . . . *Brrrrrump!*

The entire house shuddered with their freedom.

I sat pulverized. There had never been so inconsiderate a fury of undisciplined joy by the upstairs workers. The longer the job dragged on, the more careless they became. But these men were intoxicated with what I still regard as a sacred beverage — liberty. I was ruled by this great liberal scruple. As they scuffled and kicked around overhead, choking with the hysteria of the Harrow Road, gulping with Hammersmith fun, for a ball they used, I imagined, a wad of my old newspapers, tied up in an oil rag. They had before. Their trampling was atrocious. I put my book away and stood up. The shindy grew in wild intemperance. “Goal,” panted the fat painter. *What goal?*

(Once you unchain one who has never tasted freedom, his wild ego will know no limit. But I did not desire to be the person to recall these men to order.) I put on my hat and moved silently out, as in certain circumstances, rather than strike a man, one would abruptly make haste to leave a room. As I went I thought of bread and circuses, of Clodius who petted the plebs in preparation for the coming of a despot — the great prototype of modern dictators. Not that any of the hills of the Rome of antiquity were Rotting Hills. The rot was in the valleys between. There it was worse than with us: frequently, it seems, houses would cave in, shop-property be demolished by spontaneous collapse. Little wonder when we think of the six storeyed tenements, renting not rooms but bunks, so that easily two or three hundred persons could be packed into one smallish building. I have never read anywhere that the Romans had the rot: probably their houses dropped to pieces from other causes.

AS, STILL ABSORBED (thinking of Rome partly I suppose to clothe raw realities in a classical remoteness), I descended the newly-painted Roman stairway, the sun gilding the shimmering dust of the windowpanes, the uproar from the open door above receded. But I found myself obliged — if I were to continue at all with my parallel — considerably to deromanize my im-

age of the time. Though a dictator might be expected here long before the century's end, that after all was not because London resembled the Rome of Clodius — which already was like New York or more so. Beside Paris or Vienna, London is a centre, not a city. We improvise ways of civilized living in it, and it *is* a centre, though otherwise a place of about the same natural glamour as Bradford or Nottingham. From our apartment now came a thud, a muffled bellow of blurred noise with it. A goal! The shock-tactics of the fat painter doubtless responsible, the neat footwork of the bricklayer's mate no match for a rushing avalanche of fat. The young plasterer's mate passed at a gallop, with a friendly grimace, windmilling with one arm as he forced it into his jacket.

Once outside I moved quickly along — no further need to disguise the fact that I was in flight from joy. I was met by a contradictory sight — to what went on *chez moi*, I mean, a flat contradiction. Road workers were remaking sections of the road. They worked under the direction of foremen, who never left the road, and the men never stopped: they seldom spoke to one another, except about what they were doing. I only saw them laugh once: a young elegant from behind a bank-counter loftily sauntered a shade too near where a load of slimy pebbles was being discharged. He jumped — but

a neat granitic spray pelted all over his nice new trousers and nice sports-coat. The burst of laughter was unrestrained — not insulting. The road-workers were trained to work quickly; they were the same men who had made the airfields during the war, and remade them at top speed. Eight drills, for instance, each as explosive as a motor-bike, were in massed action, blasting down to the eighteen-inch line of the specification, and though there was no rushing but concentrated deliberation — of progressive unmaking, layer by layer, and then of remaking, from earth-line to the street-level — the tension of the time-table was felt. Were these Irish workmen? People said so in the shops. But this may have only been because it was an Irish contractor and the men were small. Here was the gang; and there was the ganger. This is how my house-party of rot-hunters must work one day, when the honeymoon is over. I do not say this with satisfaction: in theory at least I am all for football and song.

WE KEEP A WINDOW BOX for birds. When there is some sun, watching sparrows rolling in our mould, sparring with one another in featherweight skirmishings upon the rim of the box — but a matter of fifteen feet above the ferocious marmalade cat on the roof beneath: shaking the sooty earth out of their wings, or sometimes asleep, become

drowsy in the sheltered warmth — this is very pleasant indeed. The author of *Far Away and Long Ago* did a good job on the London Sparrow. I have always liked the common finch, that plebeian bird, as ordinary as grass. Whatever effort I made, however, I could not, I knew, find the joy of the bricklayers, painters and plasterers, pleasant, or see them as big human sparrows. Their class has no part in this — their dirty clothes and husky voices — there is an obstacle to our sharing the joy of adults of our species indiscriminately, as we can with birds or many quadrupeds. The rich contrive to repel us in *their* way, the poor in theirs.

Crossing to the other side of the street, I reached, in the next block up, the office of Thomas Cook and Sons. Those ornamental places advertised in the window, the archaic glamour of Cook's placard-world, were not my destination. I was going to Llanmaerth. I put my hand up to open the door, but found myself looking at the carpenter and stopped. He had come up close to my side. "Where did you spring from!" I enquired. "I didn't spring, sir, at all. I was walking. I was just behind you." "Ah!" I gave him a stern look. He admitted he had followed me. The carpenter gave in return his half-grin, in the midst of his discoloured cheek. "If you was going away, sir." As if some ugly wind had blown upon them, the embers in his tobacco-green eyes sulphurously

sparkled, with their minute red particles of fire. "If you was . . ." But the carpenter was a lone wolf: I felt no responsibility as regards *his* joy—which in any case was confined to destruction. "If I was?" I asked. "Well, there's one place Harry, that's the plasterer, told me I'd missed in the toilet, where the rot . . ." "The rot?" "Yes, the dry

rot, sir . . ." "In the toilet the rot will remain!" I found myself saying, to my surprise. I could never have been rude to the plasterer, or spoken discourteously to the bricklayer, nor have turned my back upon a painter. I turned my back squarely upon the carpenter, as I burst my way almost into Cook's. *I* was going to taste liberty as well.

A Small Pittance of Reason

He looked upon us as a sort of Animals to whose Share, by what Accident he could not conjecture, some small Pittance of Reason had fallen, whereof we make no other Use than by its Assistance to aggravate our natural Corruptions, and to acquire new ones which Nature had not given us: That we disarmed ourselves of the few Abilities she had bestowed, had been very successful in multiplying our original Wants, and seemed to spend our whole Lives in vain Endeavours to supply them by our own Inventions. That as to myself, it was manifest I had neither the Strength or Agility of a common *Yahoo*, that I walked infirmly on my hinder Feet, had found out a Contrivance to make my Claws of no Use or Defence, and to remove the Hair from my Chin, which was intended as a shelter from the Sun and the Weather. Lastly, That I could neither run with Speed, nor climb Trees like my Brethren (as he called them) the *Yahoos* in this Country.

That our Institutions of Government and Law were plainly owing to our gross Defects in Reason, and by consequence, in *Vertue*; because Reason alone is sufficient to govern a Rational Creature. . . .

JONATHAN SWIFT, *in GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*, 1726

Geoffrey Moore



*THREE
WHO
DID NOT
MAKE A REVOLUTION*

A critical study

IN THE EARLY NINETEEN THIRTIES a three-star shell burst on the literary horizon. Its name was Auden-Spender-Isherwood. The critics, and their liberal-intellectual public, for a time treated Auden-Spender-Isherwood as three aspects of the same phenomenon. Even now their names are still linked, though they themselves are strung across two continents and separated by twenty years of individual work. The reasons are connected with their style and subject matter. And with their politics.

When the British Foreign Office officials Burgess and MacLean dis-

appeared last year — presumably to Russia — Mr. Isherwood was interviewed in Santa Monica and Mr. Spender in London. It was not reported whether Mr. Auden was approached in New York but I suspect not, for he is reliably known as a devout Anglican.

The fact is that Burgess and MacLean had been friends of the Terrible Three. Spender had once been a member of the Party, and Isherwood was *his* friend. Ergo, a promising little hot-bed for the FBI and MI5 to poke about in, particularly as all three, friends and luminaries, seemed to have written some pretty

damn radical stuff back there in the thirties.)I can imagine a band of earnest Special Agents finding the *Ascent of F6* rather heavy going.)

THEIR POLITICS is the thing many people remember first about the Trio of the Thirties. They were unfortunate enough to come to maturity at exactly that time between the two world wars when spiritual and social conditions were at their worst. Like other young men of conscience and spirit, therefore, they tried to do something about it. The capitalist system was creaking under the Depression, but in Russia a third Five-Year Plan was under way and it looked wonderful. Marx in all his glory was being substantiated by the sober testimony of the Webbs. Post-revolutionary serfdom could not be seen for the blinding light of Eisenstein, Mayakovsky, and the Moscow Arts Theatre. There seemed to be one country in the world at least where something practical was being done about the New Life.

It is easy, looking back, to see how misguided everyone was. But the issues seemed very clear then. Christianity had been tried for nearly two thousand years and had come up with the horror of the First World War. Communism offered the only plausible systematic alternative. Besides, it was so almighty noble, and the golden-haired young men who marched

with dignity "on the last mile to Huesca" were suckers for nobility. But they did die, at any rate — and die voluntarily. They were not drafted.

Auden and Isherwood were never members of the Party. In fact, Isherwood always was an essentially non-political character, although greatly concerned with values. Spender joined only briefly. But these three brilliant young men became a focus for the sentiments of progressive youth. There was an intense mystical idealism about the Workers — to whom as middle-class intellectuals they felt inferior — and a sentimental envisioning of a new dawn, from the rainbow-hued pristininity of which man's nature would emerge fresh-washed, and all the world would be comrades.

"Oh young men oh young comrades," sang Spender, who was always the most political-minded of the group, "it is too late now to stay in those houses your fathers built . . ." And later he wrote *Forward from Liberalism* for the Left Book Club and went to the Spanish War, although hardly, as he admits in his autobiography *World Within World*, "on the last mile to Huesca." But his politics would have been no more interesting than those of any other young left-wing intellectual of the thirties if it had not been for his art. The same is true of Auden and of Isherwood. Their art and their politics were

really inseparable, making an exciting nimbus around them which brought interviews and social fame. Add to this the fact that in a socially-conscious England they were highly eligible upper middle-class Oxford and Cambridge young men and that they published their remarkable first verses and sketches while still at the university, and you get the measure of their attraction. When, a couple of years later, the star-shell burst in America, the literary critics broke into applause for reasons not very much different.

IT WAS AUDEN who made the first impact, when, in 1930, his highly personal yet impersonally-expressed *Poems* were published by T. S. Eliot at Faber's. Poetry has never been the same since. Auden used private references, chopped-off articles, and twisted grammar. But he managed to make his choppings and twistings in some obscure intimate way attractive, because he had a fine ear for music and a technical mastery which few poets in this century have surpassed. What was more, he had intellect as well as intelligence, and his verse, when it was understandable, breathed authority. When it wasn't, it attracted you by its fascinating strangeness so that you thought perhaps you did understand it after all. He developed what might be called a "mind-music," which chimed interiorly like a deliberately cracked bell. In this dec-

ade, when the highest term of praise was "amusing" and Freud was at his apogee, to quote Auden was to be *au fait*.

Spender was a different kettle of fish. Many people preferred him because he wrote directly about his emotions in that queer language of modern "conceits" that these so-called Pylon poets affected. They read Spender after a bellyful of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, and his free, lyrical form, his oddly attractive syntax and cry from the heart, his essential modernness, seemed to be worth a dozen *Rapes of the Lock* or *In Memoriams*. Spender could not equal the music of Auden's "Fish in the unruffled lake" or "Look, stranger . . .," nor, like Auden, juggle successfully with traditional forms, but he was nearer somehow, more personal, inward, a Romantic. He contacted the world through people and things rather than ideas. If the hand of the terrible Auden, with his green eye shade and his sarcastic remarks, his familiarity with passports, barricades, and flights across the frontier, had not been on him — if the social preoccupations of his generation had not lain heavily on his conscience, you felt that he might have been one of those pure poets of the nineties. Spender was lyrical and charmingly "modern" about machines. Every high school and college anthology of Modern Poetry seems to contain either his "Landscape near an Aerodrome"

with its aircraft "more beautiful and soft than any moth" or "The Express," which glided like a queen from the station and was finally mystically elevated above nature ("wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal").

ISHERWOOD was another story again, I. Novelist of the group, at school a friend of Auden's and an undergraduate at Cambridge while Auden and Spender were at Oxford. Spender's autobiography fills in some details about the young Isherwood. When Spender met him, he had already published one novel, *All the Conspirators*, and was accepted by Auden as an equal. Spender was the shy friend, the new boy, and it was still rather in this capacity that he went to stay with Isherwood in Berlin when Isherwood was writing *The Memorial* and collecting the material for "Sally Bowles," "Mr. Norris," and the other Berlin stories. Isherwood collaborated with Auden on three plays (*The Ascent of F6*, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, *On the Frontier*) and a highly individual book of travel and socially-conscious reportage about China (*Journey to a War*). Isherwood had a remarkable talent for imaginative reporting and a subtle sense of comedy, but he was never in the news so much as the other two. He was the tail of the comet.

When these three young writers

were published in the United States they seemed typically English in spite of their rejection of nearly all that England in the popular mind stood for. But though English in idiom and cadence, their spirit was the spirit of the intellectuals in America too. They struck off just that right mixture of impersonality, cynicism, and left-wing lyricism which was needed for the disillusioned and impatient thirties. And now, twenty years after, one of them is in Santa Monica, another is in New York and the third, barred from the States, hovers between England and the Mediterranean. What happened during that time?

Auden lived the literary life in London after leaving Cambridge. He published half a dozen books of verse, each more technically skillful and more ironic as he surveyed the picturesque hypocrisies of the British social system. His plays with Isherwood showed an acute awareness of the personal problems arising out of any attempt to be reconciled with what England between the two wars stood for. But they were too consciously "arty" and psychological, and the verse, being clever on the page but neither rhetorical nor witty, did not make much sense on the stage.

In his long poem, *Spain*, in 1937, Auden began to show that maturity which he has now. He was concerned with the artist's responsibility in a world where values are spectacu-

larly flouted. In *September 1, 1939*, he expressed it in this way:

. . . There is no such thing as the
State
And no one exists alone.
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police,
We must love one another or die.

By this time he was already in America, where he has remained, living a consciously Village life in darkest Manhattan, growing more spiritual, more intellectual, more obscure, lecturing and reviewing, but continuing, a nicotine-stained Galahad, in pursuit of his personal Grail. This was proved to be, in *For the Time Being*, nothing less than Acceptance, Negative Capability, the ultimate, and from the strength of the lyricism, it seems as if he is almost there. At the end of the road lies greatness, as well as personal salvation, and it is not farther from the clever politics of his youth than the journey Donne made, or Shakespeare.

Isherwood, in the course of battling around the world with Auden and exploring the low life of Berlin, published three or four highly readable character-study novels, and one more serious, *The Memorial*, which, under the influence of Joyce, Faulkner, Virginia Woolf — or all three — he cut up into odd time sequences. He came to the States about the same time as Auden. He was not so well-known as Auden and Spender,

but his skill at dialogue was sufficiently appreciated in Hollywood.

Like those other script-writing, novel-writing, reviewing, lecturing and yogi-practising Englishmen in Hollywood, Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard, Isherwood presents a dilemma to the pure-minded. How can you translate Baudelaire and also write the script of the *Great Sinner*? Looking like a small gentle Viking, with his fair hair, blue eyes, and brown face, Isherwood will tell you. He likes to live in his shady canyon house near Santa Monica beach and pursue his own interests; he loves the desert which starts just beyond his house, and he loves California. If the movie men will pay a few hundred dollars a week while he writes an occasional script, why should he not do the best he can? In any case they will rewrite it, as they did with that glamorized life of Dostoevski.

It might be answered that, if he is a novelist, a man might live by writing novels, and it is perhaps significant that Isherwood has only produced one, *Prater Violet*, during his thirteen or so years in America. That, however, did not fly away from the reader so quickly as the tales of Sally Bowles and Mr. Norris, mainly because of the impressive character-study of the film director, Bergman. Isherwood seemed to be pulling himself back to the seriousness of *The Memorial*, and his silence may mean the gestation of a new

novel which will prove to be his best, for he has it in him and it could just as well be written in Santa Monica as in Timbuktu — or London.

— Or could it? This is a question that applies to Auden as well, and to every exile. It is possible that, for all their protests, Auden and Isherwood are not entirely happy. The Englishman in America is free from the niggling restraints of life in a democracy where everyone is trying to act like an aristocrat, from all the deep-seated problems once bound up with school, home, and Mother; but he inherits other difficulties, not least of which is the sense of not being at home artistically. This is quite a different thing from not being at home socially — that is rarely a problem. Auden and Isherwood in England might have been leaders, producers of great art, if they had lived with England during the war and after, and felt the changes. They might have expressed some of the longings and hopes that the frustrated rising generation in England now feel. When they left, their own country seemed rotten and hopeless. In the state of Europe as a whole they were so “deeply involved,” as Auden wrote to Isherwood from Iceland, that they wanted to escape to a place of “lunatics,” as a heart-torn Christian escapes to a monastery. How could they honestly fight for what they did not believe in? The answer was

perhaps given by one of their friends, now Professor of Poetry at Oxford, when he said:

It is the logic of our times,
No subject for immortal verse,
That we who lived by honest dreams
Defend the bad against the worse.

STEPHEN SPENDER remained in England, and his story, together with earlier details, is given in his autobiography. This is a curious book, and Spender himself is a curious case. The style of the book is attractive and delicate, and its honesty is transparent. But it goes beyond honesty and becomes self-denigration. In his utter frankness, Spender, like Rousseau, tells us details that we would really rather not hear if we are to retain our respect for him.

The book's account of Auden and Isherwood as undergraduates is entertaining, of Spender's childhood and youth as lyrical as the best of his early poems, and more lucid. But from the undergraduate days on, the protestations (“If I was clever or wise — I was neither . . .”; “I was dominated by my emotions . . .”; “I have no opinions of my own . . .”; “I have no character or will power outside my work . . .”) come so thick and fast that they irritate rather than disarm. And surely Spender's version of his method of working (“action for me consisted in seizing on to impulses, without considering the

results, and letting them carry me whither they would") must be oversimplified? There is his frankness, too, about homosexual relations which, for me at least, produces the wrong effect. And there are remarks like "There is in modern love an awareness of the psychological motives involved which must be without parallel in past times." The book generally gives me the feeling that Spender is now carrying his well-known reputation for shyness, loneliness, and honesty like a banner before him. It is all too ingenuously abject.

I find it very sad that the book should produce this impression on me, because I went to it with great enthusiasm. I did not expect — or find — pomposity or heroics, but I did not expect littleness. Perhaps it is because there is too much dabbling in what, Freud or no Freud, is really the mud of self-pity. Perhaps it is because, in disembarassing himself of so many weaknesses, he seems to shrug off any responsibility for them.

Spender's account of his sentimental drift towards Communism is complemented by his contribution to *The God That Failed*. It ought to be clear from this — even to the State Department — that Spender's flirtation with Communism is long past and that he would be harmless, if not actually valuable, lecturing in America.

Spender's poetry over the last

twenty years has improved in technique but lost its power to startle and move. He has not ever equalled the force and fire of the poems he published when he was twenty-four. *Ruins and Visions* in 1942 showed a still lyrical but older and sadder Spender, rather sorry for himself. In the last books, *Poems of Dedication* and *The Edge of Being*, the poetry is wearing thin. This is because of the increasing amount of self-analysis and self-pity, a tendency which is shown very clearly in the autobiography — if not by the fact of the autobiography alone, for a creative artist does not usually set down the "true facts" in his autobiography until he feels his inspiration flagging. Spender is still only forty-three, and his talent, which seems to have run increasingly to prose over the years, may bear mature fruit in short stories (like the *Burning Cactus* collection of 1936), or criticism (like the intuitive *The Destructive Element* of 1935). Such easy and attractive prose as he wrote in *World Within World* would be well suited to finer subject matter.

It might be asked why, since Spender did stay in his own country, his art did not flower. I believe that the answer lies with the individual. There were currents in England that Spender could have been in touch with, but instead of writing about these things from a personal point of view — which was his early

method — he wrote about himself. A recent article of his in the London *Observer* shows that he may now be aware of other potentialities.

TO LOOK BACK ON the career of Auden-Spender-Isherwood since their star first burst upon us is to review the public record of a generation's education. In the thirties, it seemed shameful not to be left-wing, not to hate "the wasteful old system" and be fired by the prospect of a new dawn. In the forties, the world was at war and enough had happened in Russia and elsewhere to make it clear that the solution

was not so simple as it had seemed. Now, in the fifties, America is the center, selfish capitalism has become enlightened private enterprise, and black is very nearly white. At all events it has become clear that there is no political panacea. The lucky ones, whose conversions and enthusiasms were never made so brutally public, may lean back in their obscurity and breathe, when they see Spender barred or Hiss convicted, "There but for the grace of God go I." Here, in fact, in small, is the whirligig of life, *la ronde*, the eternal round of fashion, fortune, and vicissitude.

Spender On Taking Sides

» I was driven on by a sense of social and personal guilt which made me feel firstly that I must take sides, secondly that I could purge myself of an abnormal individuality by co-operation with the worker's movement.

It is clear to me now that I did not need to join the Communists, because I had already taken sides. My side was whoever believed in social justice, freedom, and telling the truth about the methods which it was necessary to use in order to attain these ends. . . .

» It is evident to me now that my duty is to state what I support without taking sides. Neither side, in the present alignment of the world, represents what I believe to be the only solution of the world's problems.

STEPHEN SPENDER, *in* THE GOD THAT FAILED, *Hamish Hamilton, London, 1950*

Books In Short

America and the Mind of Europe. Edited by Lewis Galantière. Library Publishers. \$2.75. 125 pages. Some time last year Norman Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, was inspired with the very common-sense idea that since America had more or less taken on the responsibility of Europe's future, Americans ought to have some clear idea of what representative Europeans think of us, how they regard our leadership. The result of Mr. Cousins' inspiration is this immensely illuminating — and conveniently handy — little volume, reprinted in full from the January 13, 1951, issue of the *Saturday Review*. Some of the acutest minds and ablest writers we have in the democratic world today were marshalled for the enterprise — Raymond Aron, Denis de Rougemont, Arthur Koestler, Stephen Spender, Melvin J. Lasky, among others. What they have to say is often wise and penetrating, sometimes provocative, even challenging. It is not necessary to agree with all the views expressed, or to like them. The value of this little volume is that it faces, and makes every one of its readers face, the fact of American leadership and the question: Is America fulfilling the task? As Arthur Koestler explains:

In our century the seat of the Holy Roman Empire has shifted to Wash-

ington, D. C. Left to themselves the nations of Europe would be as helpless against the onslaught of the Eastern hordes as were the feudal princes of the Middle Ages. The inescapable conclusion is bitter to admit for us Europeans and unpleasant to accept for you Americans. We know that you haven't asked for this tragic responsibility and that you are not prepared for it. But history casts its parts without regard for the actors' wishes.

In general, at least as presented in these essays, most thoughtful Europeans who care about saving the free world, feel that, as Raymond Aron puts it: "There is no escape from the acceptance of American leadership." The grave trouble now is whether America has accepted it. "We hear too many voices from Washington," he writes, "to know which voice truly represents you and which speaks with real authority. If we are to accept American leadership, America must herself find leaders whose leadership she accepts." That lack we can not dodge or explain away. It is too lamentably true.

These writers are not one-sided, however. Europe also is summoned to face honestly her own shortcomings and confusion. Arthur Koestler, in a brilliant analysis of terms and their meanings, points out the false dilemma in which the European finds himself because of his "obses-

sive preoccupation with the alternatives 'Right' and 'Left,'" which enable him to "continue his lusty, anachronistic battles," thereby bolstering his political libido and deluding himself that he is "fighting great battles for a praiseworthy cause."

As to European culture, Melvin Lasky (the American editor of the German-language magazine, *Der Monat*) tackles the explosive problem of American-European attitudes and relations on this subject. It is a problem that, as he says, "burns at the center of contemporary European consciousness." The European tends to be arrogant toward us, we to be belligerently self-conscious, on occasion to place national vanities above intelligent appreciation. That a truce must some day be called Mr. Lasky considers essential to the preservation of Western culture. And he is hopeful about the results of such a truce. "Possibly then," he concludes, "we can remind ourselves, as Eliot once said, that it may still be the destiny of the American to become a European in a way that no European ever could become." The publication of this collection of essays is a genuine contribution to that end.

Edwin Arlington Robinson. A Critical Study. By Ellsworth Barnard. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$4.75. 318 pages. Just seventeen years ago, on April 5, one of America's major, and in many ways

most unique, poets died. Today, except in college classrooms, he is almost completely forgotten. This fact is rather a condemnation of our times perhaps than of the poet. If Edwin Arlington Robinson had chosen to express what he had to say in prose rather than poetry, he might yet be a family name. For he wrote simply and truly of people he knew well — of New England farmers and small-town "characters." And he wrote also of the grand myth of the English-speaking world — of Tristram and Iseult, Lancelot and Guinevere — with both romantic and creative imagination. The trouble is, perhaps, that he did not of his own will choose poetry — he was hounded by the daemon of poetry as his Maine forefathers were hounded by a stern and too-just God. "If I could have done anything else on God's green earth, I never would have written poetry," Robinson once confessed. Instead of outflowing, as a true poet should be, he is often stingily elliptical; instead of communicating emotion, he often obscures his simplest intent; instead of lyricism, he often gives us nothing more than rather self-conscious prose. In spite of these shortcomings, Robinson was undeniably a poet of real distinction. In this admirable study by Professor Barnard, he is evaluated and analyzed with the critical sympathy and acute penetration that most creative writers long for and rarely find. Every student, ev-

ery teacher, every reader of Edwin Arlington Robinson will find that the lines he is studying, teaching, reading, will mean much more with Professor Barnard's judicious volume at his side.

F. N.

The Peculiar War. A Reporter in Korea. By E. J. Kahn, Jr. Random House. \$2.75. 211 pages. When the *New Yorker's* roving Mr. Kahn, Jr., returned late last June from a three-month stint in the "Land of the Morning Calm," he not only carried a rather fragile tall, black Korean horsehair hat in his hand, and a Brooks Brothers gift certificate for a yellow, button-down shirt in his pocket, but he also brought with him a wealth of fascinating, if sometimes slightly irrelevant, intelligence. The latter, condensed and organized, has been turned into a very personal Baedeker of that first UN "police action" which brought a grim and grimy — though somewhat peculiar — war to a hapless people of thirty million, and blood and tears to many Americans and a few of their comrades in arms. For those who care to know about the weather and vegetation in Korea, or what a G.I. thinks, what a tank patrol looks like, what a Korean feels, or how the news is made — here is a sober, but not always accommodating, guide.

G. ST.

The Brotherhood of Fear. By Robert Ardrey. Random House. \$3.00. 342 pages. The main action takes place on a small unimportant island

inhabited by four families of peaceful shepherds. The waves roll gently over soft beaches or break phosphorescently against wall-like cliffs; the sheep-bells tinkle gently; and the barking of dogs or even the occasional howl of a wolf do not disturb anybody much. But this is a horrible and masterful story of the present plight of all humanity. For the island belongs to a totalitarian state, and its inhabitants are gradually subjugated by an officer of the state police, who is cast up handcuffed and half-dead on their shore, together with his escaped prisoner. It is a story of the conflict between democratic civilization and a man to whom the State is God. It is also the story of a love that is stronger than fear, and of an urge to fight for freedom that is stronger than love.

The book is poignantly beautiful, at times almost unbearably tragic, and yet never desperate. Except for certain improbabilities in the life and characters of the islanders, it is truly human, and so full of suspense that you accept and live it all — humiliations, pains, horrors, bewilderments, hopes, and joys.

But this exciting novel also makes you think. It poses again the question: "To be or not to be" — not for one man, but for all of us. Will mankind "take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them," or, weakened by his own nobility, will he lie down to be overcome and ruled by a new totalitarian creature

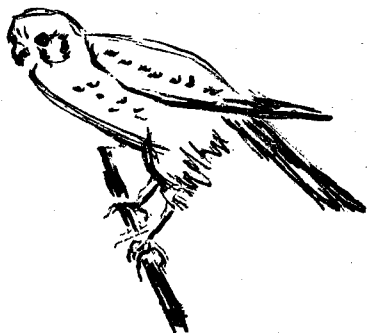
such as the officer Konnr sees in his nightmare? At his last briefing he had been impressed by a mysterious official whose eyes he could not see behind his glasses. But in his dream the man "shook his head very slowly, and took off his glasses, and now Konnr saw why he wore the dark glasses. His cheeks ran up smoothly to his eyebrows, and he had no eyes at all." E. KRYLENKO

Serenade to the Big Bird. By Bert Stiles. Norton & Co. \$2.75. 216 pages. Among the many books to emerge from the Second World War this brief and lively account of an American airman stationed in England during the height of the Allied air offensive against Germany will take—no doubt—a unique position. Not for its literary merits, to be sure, but rather for the undiluted human spirit and the reflective, sensitive personality of its author. Bert Stiles was twenty-three and just out of college when—in April 1944—he flew his first bombing mission. A few months (and 35 missions) later, Bert Stiles was dead, shot down in a fighter plane over Hanover, Germany. The short span of time in between—the waiting, the strain, the terror, the sudden death in the air of a friend, the whole "pretty futile way to live," the aimless leave in London, and the airborne optimism that makes the world look like a darn good place to live in from 20,-

000 feet above—is crystallized in this gentle, rough and rowdy posthumous book.

Duveen. By S. N. Behrman. Random House. \$3.50. 302 pages. When Mr. Joseph Duveen (later elevated to Lord Millbank) decided that Europe had art and America money and that a simple exchange of the two would bring immortality to America, solvency to Europe and, last but not least, profit to Mr. Duveen—he had the ingredients to become the world's super salesman of *objets d'art*. His slogan, "You can get all the pictures you want at fifty thousand dollars apiece—that's easy. But to get pictures at a quarter of a million apiece—that wants doing," soon got him an in with the cream of America's multi-millionaires—the Mellons, Fricks, Altmans, Kresses and Morgans. This detailed book by author-playwright Behrman of comedy fame—based on his series of *New Yorker* profiles—is a delightful and learned treatise on a bombastic time when wealthy Mr. Frick, on Saturday afternoons, sat on a Renaissance throne, under a baldachino, in his mansion on Fifth Avenue and Seventy-sixth Street, reading the *Saturday Evening Post* and glancing now and then at the art treasures he had accumulated with the thoughtful help of Mr. Duveen, while the organist in the background played "Silver Threads Among the Gold." G. ST.

Down
to
Earth



THE HAWKLET

Alan Devoe

AS WE PEER AROUND US at this surprising world in which we find ourselves, a major part of our effort to understand it and give it the necessary orderliness for intelligibility consists in sorting the "blossoming, buzzing confusion" into categories. We perceive that things may be separated into groups and clumps of similarities. There are look-alikes, sound-alikes, live-alikes, and numbers of other likeness-compartments into which we may break down the disorderly jumble to give it the neatness and manageability of the classified. If every single thing in the world had to be considered singly, we'd soon go mad. We are inveterate groupers and lumpers.

When categorizing is done with scrupulous care, as by scientists, it may furnish many useful clues to truth; or at any rate it can be a fine

help to constructing practical fictions. Very few of us, however, tackle the chore of classification in any spirit much more demanding than that of the ready rule-of-thumb. Does a creature live in the water and get about by swimming? Very well; it's a fish. Does another creature have warm blood and rapidly beating wings and go zooming about through the air? Very well; that's a bird. And is yet another creature elongated and smooth-bodied and wriggly, and does it progress through the life-adventure by twistings and squirmings? A category lies ready-made for it, and we quickly put it there as with a sigh of relief that the world can be made so tidy and well-ordered. Our creature is a snake.

To any reasonably deep-insighted philosopher, of course, nothing in

this world of ours is any more strange or surprising than anything else. A hippopotamus is pretty stunning, true; but then so is a blade of grass. It is very queer that a Mexican tree-porcupine can live without drinking; but it is as queer that anything can live at all, anywhere, under any circumstances, with fluids or without them. Everything under the sun is entirely prodigious, and ultimately incomprehensible. However, unless we are philosophers of this sort, most of us do feel that some things are more surprising than others. The element of surprise, very often, is related to the matter of categories. All of a sudden the neatness of our categorized world is exploded by the refusal of a creature to stay properly in the compartment to which we had assigned it. We are confronted, as it were, by revolution. The patterned neatness we had imposed is sprawled askew. We find it astonishing.

We learn (for example) that that tremendous fish, a whale, which lives in the water and gets about by swimming, is nevertheless not a fish at all but a mammal. It has warm dugs and suckles its baby even as does a rabbit. We learn that the dusk-flying bird, skimming around our heads swallow-fashion in the summer evening, is a mammal too. It is a bat, a kind of mouse gone aloft, and it neither makes a nest nor lays eggs. On a day of amazement, we hear that the wrig-

gling snake we had so confidently put among the serpents is in fact called an eel and is a fish. It is a cousin to the trout in our brook, and not even a fourth cousin to the garter snake on the old stone wall. We grow saucer-eyed. A mammal, that furry-familiar kind of being, may have a cold wet skin and live in the sea; or it may sprout wings and hop clear off the earth and go flittering through the sky. A fish, that well-known finny and fish-shaped being, may present itself elongated and wriggly as a viper. It is an odd, odd world, this, and can take us by surprise.

IT IS THIS SURPRISINGNESS of a category violated, a mental picture upset, that gives special piquance to the hawk called *Falco sparverius* that is now in April investigating nest-sites and crying *killy-killy-killy* over the greening New England fields.

The category "hawkness" is a well-established thing in the minds of most of us. It stands for great spread-winged birds with piercing eyes and powerful talons that soar in the high sky, peering for prey. It stands for falconry, and "hawk-eyed" and "hawk-nosed"; it stands for bigness, majesty, and power. It stands for predation, so much so that many of us may say of almost any hawk that it is a "chicken hawk." That is what a hawk is . . . huge, mighty-winged, rapacious,

with a certain awfulness about its predatory beauty and a certain terror about the shadow of its giant doomful wings.

Falco sparverius is a hawk. But it may be doubted if one of a hundred of us, seeing the bird now over the April fields, guesses that it belongs to this company. It may be doubted if one in a thousand of us, learning that it does, can fail to be taken aback. *Falco sparverius* is the sparrow hawk. It is about the same size as a robin.

Should we have a chance to see a sparrow hawk in intimate close-up, as it perches on a dead tree stub or a power line and studies the stretching fields, we can perceive that in fact it has all the equipments proper to hawkness. The little beak is hawk-hooked as it ought to be, a death-weapon in miniature. The little feet are in fact the curving talons that are right for a relative of gyrfalcons and white-headed eagles. But before we can take note of these things, we have to adjust ourselves to the implausibility of the songbird-size of their possessor, and, with perhaps as much difficulty, to something else: the coloring and marking of this little bird. Most of us, unless naturalists, are likely to think of the big hawks as simply vaguely "brownish" or "grayish," for so their great dun shapes present themselves against the sky. If we have our chance to see a sparrow hawk in close-up, what we see is a

little bird so brilliantly and whimsically feathered that it looks like some creature we might expect to find only as a captive in a Chinese bird cage of red-lacquered bamboo.

Its wings and head are a soft ashy blue, and atop its head is a bright cap-patch of warm chestnut. The little bird's back is bright cinnamon brown; its breast is speckled white; its legs and feet are yellow. Backward from under the ash-blue wings extends a richly cinnamon tail. It is an astonishing mélange of exotic coloration, and perhaps most astonishing is the little bird's face. This is feathered in snow-white, with dashes and dabs of yellow-orange around ears and beak, and down each of the little bird's cheeks, from head-crown to throat, run two heavy jet-black lines, as they might have been drawn by an oriental artist's ink-brush. Here on a tree stub, overlooking the April fields, sits *Falco sparverius*, a hawk; and it is hardly to be believed.

HAWKS, as we familiarly think of them, are mighty soarers, and again (tractable in their category of hawkness) they are builders of great bulky treetop nests of sticks and coarse twigs. Our little sparrow hawk, though hawk-swift and hawk-deft in the swooping pounce, is largely a flutterer and hoverer. *Killy-killy-killy!* It cries, and darts and skitters out over the field like a frolicsome swallow. *Killy-kee-kee!*

it cries, and hovers and flutters in one mid-air spot, watching for the stir of a meadow mouse in the grass below. This is a hawk, we have to say; but a hawk as pranksome in air as a bat or a meadow lark. The great hawk-nest in the treetop? Our sparrow hawk does not make one. It seeks out an old woodpecker-hole or similar small cranny in a dead tree, and inhabits this hideaway as demurely as a chickadee. Often enough so that it is no curiosity in the ornithological records, the little sparrow hawk seeks out a birdhouse in one of our dooryards and makes its lodging in it. This, the cousin of eagles. This, the small brother of birds that can tear the head from a rabbit at one glancing stroke.

A SPARROW HAWK feeds largely on grasshoppers, crickets, and a variety of insects of that sort. It takes a good many mice and occasional other little mammals of the fields. Now and then it catches a frog or a little snake. Sometimes, very rarely, it may chase and strike down a small songbird. Mostly its killings are of such minor creatures — creatures so far below the type where we begin to think of “personality” — that only with difficulty can a sparrow hawk’s food-takings be thought of as “preda-

tory,” any more than we so think of a robin’s catching a worm or a phoebe’s nabbing a dancing midge in an April sunbeam.

We think “hawk,” and we think of a lean grimness; but sparrow hawks tend to be plump, fat-breasted little birds; and so far from being all bleak dedication to pouncing and killing, they are exuberantly playful. In courting time, particularly, male sparrow-hawks make lyrical sky-mounting flights that in effect are dances. The paired birds zoom and cavort together as festively as any creatures of the sky. We think “hawk” and we think of a harsh shrill crying that cuts the air like a knife. But the *killy-killy-killy* of a little sparrow hawk, coursing and frolicking over the Spring meadows, is as light a music and as heart-touching a sound as the not dissimilar callings of the killdeer.

It is a surprising world, and we can be fooled by easy categorizing. The big fish, spouting and plunging, turns out to be a mammal, like a fox. The big snake wriggling upstream turns out to be no snake but the trouts’ fish-cousin, an eel. In a treetop on an April morning a little bird perches and murmurs a soft little *killy-killy-kee* to itself, and looks like a songbird in a Chinese children’s fairy-tale. This is a hawk.



Draughts of Old Bourbon

WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE

A Word About the Poll Fakirs

From now until election day the literate American is going to be badly put upon with prophecy. The radio oracles and global columnists will make all sorts of tours, talking with taxi drivers, bell-men, waitresses, and Pullman porters. The soothsayers will be consulted: the astrologers, the numerologists, the readers of tea leaves, the seers of visions, and the diviners of goose entrails. Each of the weekly magazines will poll some group or other and publish tables and analyses; and the "scientific samplers" will have a new sampling ready for every Sunday edition of the papers.

Each of these prophets will present two paragraphs of "proof" that

his "survey" is the "informed" one. Drew Pearson will claim that his predictions are 88.44% accurate. (Or is it 84.48% or 44.88%: I'm always confusing Pearson's percentages with those of soap, laxatives, and little liver pills.) And Dr. Gallup will be in there trying to extend his syndication, "proving" that his pratfall of '48 was due to a 1.13% error in calculating the "variables" of the 14% vote which he had "reported" as "undecided."

None of this prophecy is likely to do much harm, because surely there aren't many literate Americans left who take it seriously. Two types of it, however, should be recognized and denounced wherever they appear.

1. The prophecy which is made

with an obviously deliberate intent to mislead. Pearson, of course, is the most notorious practitioner of this tactic. His listeners know that he is a fabricating liar and that his predictions are only another weapon in his arsenal of slander. In 1950, for instance, Pearson "predicted" the defeat of Senator Bourke Hickenlooper, of Iowa, and the Senator was reelected by the largest majority in the history of his state. Pearson's "prediction" was no more than a device by which he hoped to aid the campaign against the Senator.

A warning in Pearson's case is unnecessary, but there are several little Pearsons around who try to imitate him. They will be heard "predicting" the defeat of every candidate who doesn't seek their favor.

2. The pretentious prophecy made by some of the "scientific samplers."

There is nothing wrong, boring, illegal, or particularly objectionable about any citizen's undertaking to predict the result of an election. Nor is there anything wrong, boring, illegal, or objectionable about his selling his predictions for all he can get. The making and selling of predictions is a practice at least as old as the pyramids.

However, whenever a group of predictors start claiming that their predictions are "scientific," then the time has come for ordinary, non-scientific predictors to protest that the predictors' code has been vio-

lated. And the time has come for purchasers of predictions to be more alert than usual.

Dr. Gallup and all the "scientific samplers" will sell many dollars worth of predictions in 1952; and these predictions should be read for amusement, for diversion, perhaps for some degree of information. But they should be regarded as no more "authoritative" or "scientific" than the predictions in the astrology columns.

The same news syndicates that hire Dr. Gallup also hire the astrologers. The only difference is that the astrologers are paid a higher rate.

Shall We Kill The Atomic Scapegoats?

The government of the United States, it seems, has at last discovered the foul fiends who gave the atom bomb to Stalin. There are two of them: a Mr. and Mrs. Rosenberg. They have been duly tried and convicted. The Circuit Court of Appeals has confirmed their conviction. And sometime before election day you can bet that Mr. Truman and Mr. Acheson will see to it that the Rosenbergs pay "the extreme penalty of the law."

Once the Rosenbergs have been electrocuted, then the President can stand before the multitude and proclaim: "Yes, it is tragically true that we had among us traitors who delivered our dearest secrets into the

hands of the enemies of freedom. We at first tried not to believe it. We yelled 'red herring!' at the efforts to apprehend these traitors. But, alas, the charges proved true. So what did your government do? We leaped to the challenge. We spared not a horse nor a cent until we had ferreted out these traitors — both of them! — and prosecuted them to the full limit of the law! Now they are dead! Our community has been purged! And we can relax in the knowledge that justice has been done, that the guilty have been punished, and that the innocent have been proved so."

The thoughtful American will be disturbed, not comforted, by this performance. He will be reminded of an old, old drama — a goat stumbling through the streets of a village; villagers shrieking, hurling stones at the goat; medicine men gesturing toward the helpless goat, loading him with all the sins of the community; then the goat being driven over a cliff, carrying with him the sins and leaving behind only cleanliness and godliness.

Here are some of the disturbing elements in the Rosenberg case:

In 1941 President Roosevelt and Mr. Acheson were informed that a Communist cell was operating in Washington for the specific purpose of delivering our secrets to Moscow — and that Alger Hiss was in that cell. The bearers of this information were derided, while Mr. Hiss and the Communists were promoted.

In 1943 Harry Hopkins was placed in control of our atomic effort. While Major General Leslie Groves strove to impose the strictest secrecy, Hopkins kept the Russians informed of our progress and shipped them quantities of "heavy water" for their own experiments. This is a matter of unchallenged record.

From 1943 until 1946, in the Manhattan Project, there were scores of persons in positions of authority who held in contempt all the efforts to keep our secrets "from our great ally, Soviet Russia."

In 1946 Mr. Acheson and David E. Lilienthal drew up a plan and urged this country to deliver its atomic secrets to "international control" — meaning, to make them available to all nations, including Russia.

In 1946 FBI agents overheard a conversation between John Stewart Service, another Acheson lieutenant in the State Department, and two men who have been identified as agents of the Soviet Union. Service, in his own words, was imparting "top secrets" to the Soviet agents. He was arrested by the FBI, then reinstated, and *promoted* by the State Department. It was not until 1951 that Service was finally deprived of his job.

In 1943 officers of our Counter Intelligence overheard one Steve Nelson arranging to deliver secret information on the atomic bomb to the Russian consul in San Francisco.

Our government was so informed. Nelson was observed in the actual delivery of the information; yet he was not arrested, and he is a free man today.

From 1947 to 1949 Mr. Lilienthal, as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, defended every atomic employee who was accused of being a Communist. In 1949, before the United States Senate, he defended the propriety of the granting of fellowships in atomic energy to *known* members of the Communist Party.

In 1946 the Canadian government moved swiftly and effectively against its atomic spies. Our government refused to move in a similar manner, but chose to deny, cover up, and excuse. No objective student can reach any other conclusion but that, from 1943 to 1949, our government had a "soft" or "understanding" attitude toward all persons who tried to make American information available to the Soviet Union.

Can we, therefore, in good conscience in 1952, execute an obscure man and his wife who thought that it was unjust for us to keep secrets from "our noble ally"? Can we, in good conscience, kill the Rosenbergs in the same year that Mr. Hiss walks free to resume his frontal association with his good friend, the Secretary of State?

If the American people want to mete out justice to those responsible for the delivery of our secrets to

Russia, then we should start at the top, not at the bottom. We should demand a commutation for the Rosenbergs, and, on next November 4, begin dealing with the men whose actions and attitudes encouraged the Rosenbergs to treason.

Minute Women To The Rescue

One of the most effective political organizations in 1952 promises to be the Minute Women. It already has chapters in twenty-seven states, and it will be nationwide by the time of the party conventions. About two million women will be enrolled as members.

The stated objectives of the Minute Women are:

- » To fight Communism actively in every form.
- » To demand the removal of supporters of Communism and Socialism from our Federal and State governments, as well as from our educational system.
- » To demand efficiency and economy in all government agencies, with the adoption of the Hoover Commission Report.
- » To try to restore the soundness of our currency.
- » To sustain our belief in states rights.
- » To promote the belief that women can be effective for good in their communities and in their nation.

The national leader of the Minute

Women is Mrs. Suzanne Silvercrux Stevenson, Belgian-born sculptress and lecturer. She has been traveling by both airplane and trailer, and she speaks to large audiences an average of five days a week.

Mrs. Stevenson is the daughter of a chief justice of the Supreme Court of Belgium. She came to the United States during the First War, and has been a citizen since 1922. She is the wife of Colonel E. F. Stevenson, Army Reserve, and their home is a farm near Willimantic, Connecticut.

The Minute Women's plan of organization and attack is somewhat like that of their enemies, the Communists. There are no dues, though members may contribute from one to one hundred dollars. Contributors receive a pin and a regular news letter. There are no elections: the national organization appoints state chairmen, who in turn appoint district chairmen, etc. Members are gathered by the chain-letter method into "clusters."

The group aims frankly at becoming a powerful force to influence elections and legislation. Their device is the post card — thousands of postcards cascading onto the desk of a Congressman.

Other than Mrs. Stevenson, the best known of the Minute Women is Mrs. Hester McCullough, the Connecticut woman who was sued for libel by the entertainers Paul Draper and Larry Adler after she had objected to their proposed appearance

on the grounds that they were Communist sympathizers. Mrs. McCullough is director of the Minute Women's Committee Against Subversive Activities. She precipitated another controversy when she objected to the television appearance of actress Jean Muir, with the result that Miss Muir was dropped from the cast of "The Aldrich Family."

The Minute Women do not expect to take a position on the national elections in 1952, but they expect to support legislative efforts to limit the income tax and to preserve states rights, as well as to combat inflation.

On Whisky and Student Revolt

Two of the most popular articles ever published in THE MERCURY have been our "revolt" articles: *A Call for Revolt on the Campus* and *For a Second Whisky Rebellion*. Because of the demand for them, both these articles are now available in reprint form at the regular prices.

The popularity of these pieces would seem to be due to the spreading realization over the country that the time has come for freedom-loving Americans to have a showdown with their government.

The story of freeman versus government never changes. The men who created the government of the United States were suspicious of their creation. They submitted to the government they created only

after granting it very narrow and specific powers. And they warned their sons to be on guard lest they become enslaved by the government their fathers had created.

For twenty years now the Americans who want more and more government, more and more taxes, more and more community responsibility and less and less individual responsibility — these Americans have been in control of the expanding government. Now, in 1952, we have what may be our last chance to arrest the growth of government. This is a year for revolt, for free men to fight their government. This is the year for young men everywhere to understand that liberty is still the most revolutionary idea on earth — to understand that liberty can be preserved only as long as the spirit of revolt lives in the hearts of men.

The essential conflict in 1952 is the conflict between those Americans who are trying to persuade us that there is something *good* about expanding government — and those Americans who know, as Woodrow Wilson knew, that “the history of

liberty is the history of limitations of governmental power, not the increase of it.”

The time has come for Americans, young and old alike, to fight their government: to impose limitations on tax rates and state debt, to demand a strict accounting, and to oppose any further invasion of private responsibility.

Mr. Buckley Joins The Mercury Staff

MERCURY readers will be interested to learn that with this issue William F. Buckley Jr. joins THE MERCURY staff as an Associate Editor. The 26-year-old author of *God and Man at Yale* will write regularly for the magazine as well as work full-time as an editor. He will also do considerable traveling in order to meet our authors and readers in all parts of the country.

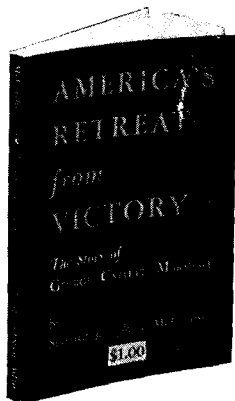
Those who have not yet read his provocative book may obtain it by writing either to THE MERCURY or to Henry Regnery Company, 20 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago 4, Ill. The price is \$3.50.

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